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EDITOR'S WELCOME

The Empire was dead. Long live the Alliance—*Star Wars: Return of the Jedi* by James Kahn, 1983

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away a story came to an end. The Empire was defeated, Darth Vader's story reached an unexpected conclusion, the heroes triumphed, and lived happily ever after...

Except, of course, they didn't. As I write this, we are poised on the threshold of an exciting new era. The build up to *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* is now well underway. Part of the spearhead for this is Chuck Wendig's new novel, *Star Wars: Aftermath*, which takes us beyond the events of *Return of the Jedi* into exciting new territories.

Speaking of new territories, this issue brings the welcome return of Blade Squadron, the B-wing strike force that made its debut back in issue #149. David J. Williams and Mark S. Williams have delivered a fantastic, action-packed mini adventure and, as ever, the tale is illustrated by Chris Trevas whose formidable *Star Wars* art helps put readers into the cockpit and hurtling into battle!

As always, we love to hear what you think and we really love to print your photos, art, and stories! So please write in and tell us what you think of all things *Star Wars*!

May the Force be with you... Always.

Jonathan Wilkins, Editor

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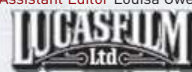


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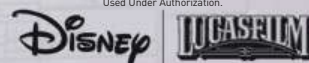
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LAUNCH PAD

ALL THE COOL NEWS FROM THE *STAR WARS* UNIVERSE

by Amy Ratcliffe

A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY IS *NOT* SO FAR, FAR AWAY!

The Walt Disney Company Chairman and CEO Bob Iger has announced that *Star Wars*-themed lands will be coming to Disneyland park in Anaheim, California, and Disney's Hollywood Studios at Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida, letting *Star Wars* fans step into the stories from a galaxy far, far away.

Ambitious plans to bring *Star Wars* to life in the two parks include creating Disney's largest single-themed land expansions ever at 14-acres each, transporting guests to a never-before-seen planet, a remote trading port and one of the last stops before wild space where *Star Wars* characters and their stories come to life.

"I am thrilled to announce the next chapter in the long and exciting history between Disney Parks and *Star Wars*," says Iger. "Through each new attraction and new land we create, we push the boundaries of what is possible. And as you can imagine, with *Star Wars*, we are taking that to a whole new level, with a whole galaxy to explore." These authentic lands will have two signature attractions, including the ability to take the controls of one of the most recognizable ships in the galaxy, the *Millennium Falcon*, on a customized secret mission, and an epic adventure that puts guests in the middle of a climactic battle.



ROGUE ONE

The first of the new standalone *Star Wars* movies, *Rogue One*, has begun principal photography. Gareth Edwards is directing the story, which takes audiences back to experience events leading up to *Star Wars: A New Hope*, as resistance fighters unite to steal plans to the dreaded Death Star. The film is produced by Kathleen Kennedy and is slated for a December 16, 2016 release.

The cast includes:
Felicity Jones
Diego Luna
Ben Mendelsohn
Donnie Yen
Jiang Wen
Forest Whitaker
Mads Mikkelsen
Alan Tudyk
Riz Ahmed



STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

With the release date drawing nearer, here's a closer look at the stunning image first seen in the Korean trailer for *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*!

Don't forget to look out for our special *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* issue released on the same day as the movie, December 18!



"*Rogue One* will be a departure from the saga films but have elements that are familiar to the *Star Wars* universe," says Kathleen Kennedy. "It goes into new territory, exploring the galactic struggle from a ground-war perspective while maintaining that essential *Star Wars* feel that fans have come to know. Gareth is such an innovative director and I'm so excited to be working with him and the extraordinary ensemble cast he's selected for *Rogue One*."

Veteran ILM visual effects supervisor John Knoll, who shares a long history with the *Star Wars* movies, dating back to the mid-1990s, originated the idea for the movie. Allison Shearmur (*The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*, *Cinderella*), John Knoll, Simon Emanuel (*The Dark Knight Rises*, *Fast & Furious 6*) and Jason McGatlin (*Tintin*, *War of the Worlds*) are executive producers. Kiri Hart and John Swartz are co-producers.

EPISODE IX UPDATE!

Writer-director Colin Trevorrow will direct *Star Wars: Episode IX*, which is set for release in 2019. While production won't begin for a few years, Trevorrow is heading to Lucasfilm this year to begin working with artists and his fellow *Star Wars* directors. "Colin is someone I've been interested in working with ever since I saw *Safety Not Guaranteed*," says Lucasfilm President Kathleen Kennedy. "The power of that film paired with the enormous success of *Jurassic World* speaks volumes about his abilities both as a storyteller and skilled filmmaker. We are thrilled to have such an incredible talent as Colin join our family and step into the *Star Wars* universe."

Trevorrow states, "This is not a job or an assignment. It is a seat at a campfire, surrounded by an extraordinary group of storytellers, filmmakers, artists, and craftspeople. We've been charged with telling new stories for a younger generation because they deserve what we all had—a mythology to call their own. We will do this by channeling something George Lucas instilled in all of us: boundless creativity, pure invention and hope."

To create the lived-in, realistic feel of *Rogue One*, Edwards chose Greig Fraser (*Zero Dark Thirty*, *Foxcatcher*) to be his director of photography and Neil Corbould (*Black Hawk Down*, *Gladiator*, *Saving Private Ryan*) to be his special effects supervisor. *Star Wars* and Lucasfilm veteran Doug Chiang (*Star Wars: Episodes I-II*) and Neil Lamont (supervising art director for the *Harry Potter* series, *Edge of Tomorrow*) will be the production designers. Additional crewmembers will include stunt coordinator Rob Inch (*World War Z*, *Captain America: The First Avenger*), creature effects supervisor Neal Scanlan (*Prometheus*), and co-costume designers Dave Crossman (costume supervisor for the *Harry Potter* series, *Saving Private Ryan*) and Glyn Dillon (costume concept artist for *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, *Jupiter Ascending*).

LAUNCH PAD

HAVING A BLAST WITH THE PAST

Never tell Christopher Miller and Phil Lord the odds! The directors will be at the helm of the forthcoming *Star Wars* film, which revolves around a young Han Solo. You might recognize Miller and Lord's names from films such as *The LEGO Movie*, *21 Jump Street*, and *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*. The pair is known for bringing a real sense of fun to their projects, and fun fits right into the *Star Wars* galaxy.

"This is the first film we've worked on that seems like a good idea to begin with. We promise to take risks, to give the audience a fresh experience, and we pledge ourselves to be faithful stewards of these characters who mean so much to us. This is a dream come true for us; not the kind of dream where you're late for work and all your clothes are made of pudding, but the kind of dream where you get to make a film with some of the greatest characters ever, in a film franchise you've loved since before you can remember having dreams at all," said Miller and Lord in an official statement.

The screenplay goes back in time to explore the story of how Han Solo became the charismatic smuggler introduced in the Mos Eisley Cantina, and will be written by Lawrence Kasdan and Jon Kasdan. Lawrence Kasdan has a history with the galaxy far, far away, having co-written *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, and *The Force Awakens*. Jon Kasdan has written episodes of *Dawson's Creek* and *In The Land of Women*. The Kasdans say Miller and Lord are, "two of the smartest, funniest, and most original filmmakers around, and the ideal choice to tell the story of Han Solo, one of the coolest characters in the galaxy."

The as-yet-untitled Han Solo film will be executive produced by Kathleen Kennedy, Lawrence Kasdan, and Jason McGatlin, and co-produced by Will Allegra. It's scheduled to be released on May 25, 2018.

CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE

In the United States, Independence Day is usually celebrated with some combination of parades, fireworks, and picnics. Parades feature a variety of floats and highlight local organizations, which means there are opportunities to add *Star Wars* to the day's festivities. In Rosemead, California, dozens of members of the 501st Legion and the Rebel Legion walked—or in R2-D2's case, rolled—in the 4th of July parade. Approximately 90 representatives of the Southern California Garrison and Sunrider Base braved the blazing sun to walk the parade route in costume. The number of participants has swelled in the last few years from just a handful of members to a massive company. The size of the group made for an impressive showing, and attendees cheered as Darth Vader led the contingent. An R2-D2 unit waved an American flag, and everyone from scout troopers to Tusken Raiders stopped for photos and to high-five with children along the route.

In Worthington Hills, Ohio, the 4th of July parade has a different theme every year. This year's focus was science fiction, so Thomas Richner worked with friends to design and build floats resembling Jabba's sail barge and a landspeeder. Richner is no stranger to building models from cardboard, and though he still used the material for the project, this was something on a bigger scale than he's



used to. Richner, Brad Ishida, Tim Erskine, and Mike Contino started construction of the barge about a week before the parade, and spent five long days creating it. The hours added up, but being fans of *Star Wars* helped them get through. Richner said, "I think that kept us motivated and energized, thinking about making it look as good as we could in the time we had. We ran around town gathering supplies all

week—wood here, staples there, etc. We obsessed about details, up to the point when it just needed to get done."

They crafted the skin from a roll of cardboard and all the finishing touches were made from regular cardboard boxes. The float was held together with the basics: screws, hot glue, and staples. Ishida said, "Building the sails for the barge ended up being one of the most satisfying parts of the experience for me. While trying my best to keep the budget as close to zero dollars as possible, I found some used canvas painting drop cloths and experimented with some layouts. It quickly became clear that they would look great if I could get them to stretch and hold their shape over some sort of frame. Luckily, my mother has decades of sewing experience and is always up for a fun project. Once I had the shape cut, it only took her a few minutes to hem the

entire sail and install small pockets to hold the framing in place. The final piece of the puzzle was getting the CPVC pipes strapped to the underside so we could create enough tension to really make them look stretched and hold their shape. I ended up spending approximately \$150



DAY WITH STAR WARS



per sail, but in the end I think we got plenty of bang for the buck."

The landspeeder took about 60 hours for Richner to build. He explained, "I knew I wanted it to drive on its own, so I borrowed an electric go-kart from my sister and attached the frame to it. The frame was wood covered in cardboard and painted. For the engines, I grabbed some burned grill covers and wrapped them around silver painted cups (used for engine exhausts). The landspeeder was a down and dirty project but still probably took about six to eight hours a week (maybe



daughter, Madelyn, dressed as a Jedi, and his wife, Kristin, walked in the parade as Darth Vader. Almost all of the costumes were made from scratch. The entourage surrounding the sail barge included a Tusken Raider, Oola, an X-wing pilot, a Jawa, and more. Ishida's mother, Jennifer Villard, worked on many costumes over

60 hours total). We got a lot of great reactions from people on the parade route. At first, they thought the barge was towing the landspeeder, but when they realized it was being driven by my daughter Lauren, they really got a kick out of that."

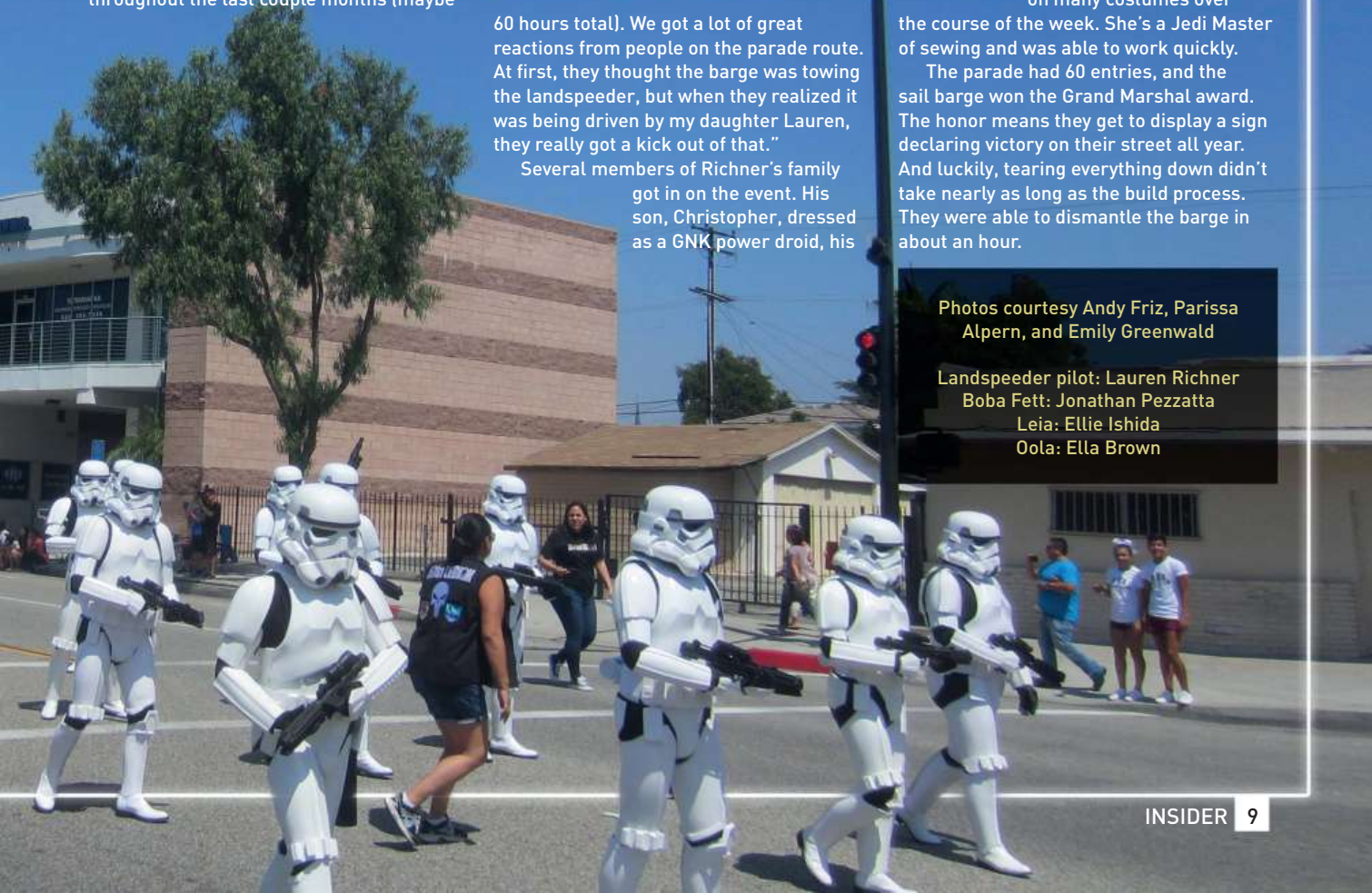
Several members of Richner's family got in on the event. His son, Christopher, dressed as a GNK power droid, his

the course of the week. She's a Jedi Master of sewing and was able to work quickly.

The parade had 60 entries, and the sail barge won the Grand Marshal award. The honor means they get to display a sign declaring victory on their street all year. And luckily, tearing everything down didn't take nearly as long as the build process. They were able to dismantle the barge in about an hour.

Photos courtesy Andy Friz, Parissa Alpern, and Emily Greenwald

Landspeeder pilot: Lauren Richner
Boba Fett: Jonathan Pezzatta
Leia: Ellie Ishida
Oola: Ella Brown



THE GALAXY AFTER RETURN OF THE JEDI

The ending of *Return of the Jedi* brought the galaxy to a turning point. With the deaths of Emperor Palpatine and Darth Vader and the destruction of the second Death Star, the Empire took a hit. Upcoming comics and books will explore the story of what happened after the Battle of Endor, as will the mobile game *Star Wars: Uprising*. The title, developed by Kabam in collaboration with The Walt Disney Company and Lucasfilm, will be the first mobile game to take place in this time period.

The role-playing game will unfold in the Anoat Sector. This corner of the universe is home to known locations such as Hoth and Cloud City, as well as new locales like Burnin Konn. The latter is a mining colony for chromium and other rare ores and its natural resources make it an appealing location for the Empire to exploit. *Star Wars: Uprising* will feature key events that players can build upon to create different journeys. A trailer for the game shows that the Empire is trying to control and manipulate information. With Commander Bragh at his side, the intimidating leader of the Purge Troopers, local Imperial Governor Adelhard tries to tell citizens that the rebellion no longer exists and that the Emperor's death is a mere rumor. But, while Adelhard broadcasts his message, rebels spread



the truth by showing a recording of the destruction of the Death Star.

Players can choose from different species and can play iconic roles, such as a Smuggler, a Bounty Hunter, or a Rebel Guerrilla. Regardless of the profession, each player will have the opportunity to learn



hundreds of new abilities and collect gear and equipment as they go on missions and participate in battles. The variety of choices available means it's possible for players to carve out unique paths.

The team at Kabam RPG Studio in San Francisco, who provided the creative juice for the game, includes former creative director of *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, Daniel Erickson and director of *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* Danny Keller.

MORE TO SAY

Register for the mobile game at PlayStarWarsUprising.com. *Star Wars: Uprising* will be available for iOS and Android in September 2015.

HAVE YOU?

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES!

In a recent issue of *Entertainment Weekly*, actress Melissa Benoist was interviewed about her role as Supergirl in the new TV series of the same name. She made a surprising, but very cool revelation!

What's one thing we don't know about you yet?
In honor of Comic-Con, a small tidbit about me is that I still am, and have been since the age of 6, a padawan learner in the *Star Wars Insider* fan club. And I was Obi-Wan Kenobi for three or four Halloweens in a row before the age of 10. That's something maybe people don't know.

THE RESULTS ARE IN... PLUS A COOL BONUS!

Hasbro opened the gates to a new kind of collectible when it launched its Black Series. The line of 6-inch *Star Wars* figures is a step up from the standard 3.75 inch figures. Since they're bigger, there's room for more detail, and Hasbro isn't holding back. The Black Series continues to expand, and Hasbro has announced the results of its Fan's Choice poll to determine which iconic character will be next to receive the Black Series treatment, which took place at Comic-Con International: San Diego last July. The winner of the poll is the Sith Lord Darth Revan. But, don't worry, there is balance in the Force. Because the voting was so close, Hasbro has decided to also make the figure that took second place and release a Black Series version of Sabine Wren from *Star Wars Rebels*.



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Michelle's fabulous
Asajj Ventress collection



A true Ventress fan! Michelle
even has her own
Asajj number plate!

SOME VENTRESS LOVE!

As one of Asajj Ventress's biggest fans, I was so happy to see how much of *Star Wars Insider* #159 was dedicated to her. "Kindred Spirits" was a wonderful tale. Much of the character analysis by Tricia Barr matched up with my own interpretation and dissection of the Nightsister (although I do wonder why Jedi Trial was mentioned as a pivotal story for her when she had much bigger roles in *The Cestus Deception* and *Yoda: Dark Rendezvous*). Even though she's one of the franchise's most compelling and complex characters, I still feel that she rarely gets the attention and love she deserves. Seeing so many pages with her in the spotlight in one issue made me incredibly happy!

In case anyone wants to challenge my title of "#1 Asajj fangirl," here are photos of my Asajj Ventress collection and my license plate.—Michelle Lawhorn, by email

Thanks for your kind words, Michelle. We love Ventress too, but have to concede that you are the bigger fan!

THE NEW GENERATION

I almost never got to go to *Star Wars Celebration* Anaheim due to the birth of our first daughter at the end of March. I'm so glad that my wife was the one who pushed me to finally go, saying that it would be a special event. Boy was she right!

While "camping out" for the *Force Awakens* panel, I got to meet Andy from *starwars.com* who asked several of us what question we would ask J.J. Abrams or Kathleen Kennedy. I had one, asking how Lucasfilm takes into consideration the fans

and their thoughts about *Star Wars*. I never thought I'd get an answer, but to my utter shock the following day, during the panel, with millions of online viewers, I saw my face up on the big screen and my question asked to Kathleen Kennedy!

That started the Celebration on a major high that was hard to beat. Having been part of the Jedi Assembly and Rebel Legion in the past, I love costuming, but this time I didn't want to do my classic *Revenge of the Sith* Obi-Wan outfit. I wanted to have a new costume that nobody had made before.

That's a very tough ask in the *Star Wars* universe! Considering I wasn't sure I'd go, and with hardly any time, I managed to put together a canon version of Darth Bane in just a couple weeks!

While walking around, a certain Mr Pablo Hidalgo (Story Group member and *Star Wars* expert!), stopped me to ask for a picture! That was truly a major highlight.



Baby Janice models
her very fetching
R2-D2 jumpsuit!



Pablo Hidalgo poses with
James in his amazing
Darth Bane costume!



James puts his question to Kathleen Kennedy at *Star Wars Celebration* Anaheim!

Celebration was amazing, I got to see old friends and make new ones and I thank everyone involved in making it such a great event.

Having enjoyed Celebration alone, my wife and I thought we could celebrate as a family on May the 4th. We went to LEGOLand Windsor in the UK to introduce our daughter, Janice, to *Star Wars*—by dressing her in a R2-D2 jumpsuit! She won't remember it, but we will—and hopefully when she's older we can look back and see where it started for her.

I love reading *Star Wars Insider* and always look forward to the next issue. See you at Celebration London!—James A.A.W. Cork, Croydon, UK

Congratulations on a very great year James, and welcome to the world (of *Star Wars*), baby Janice!



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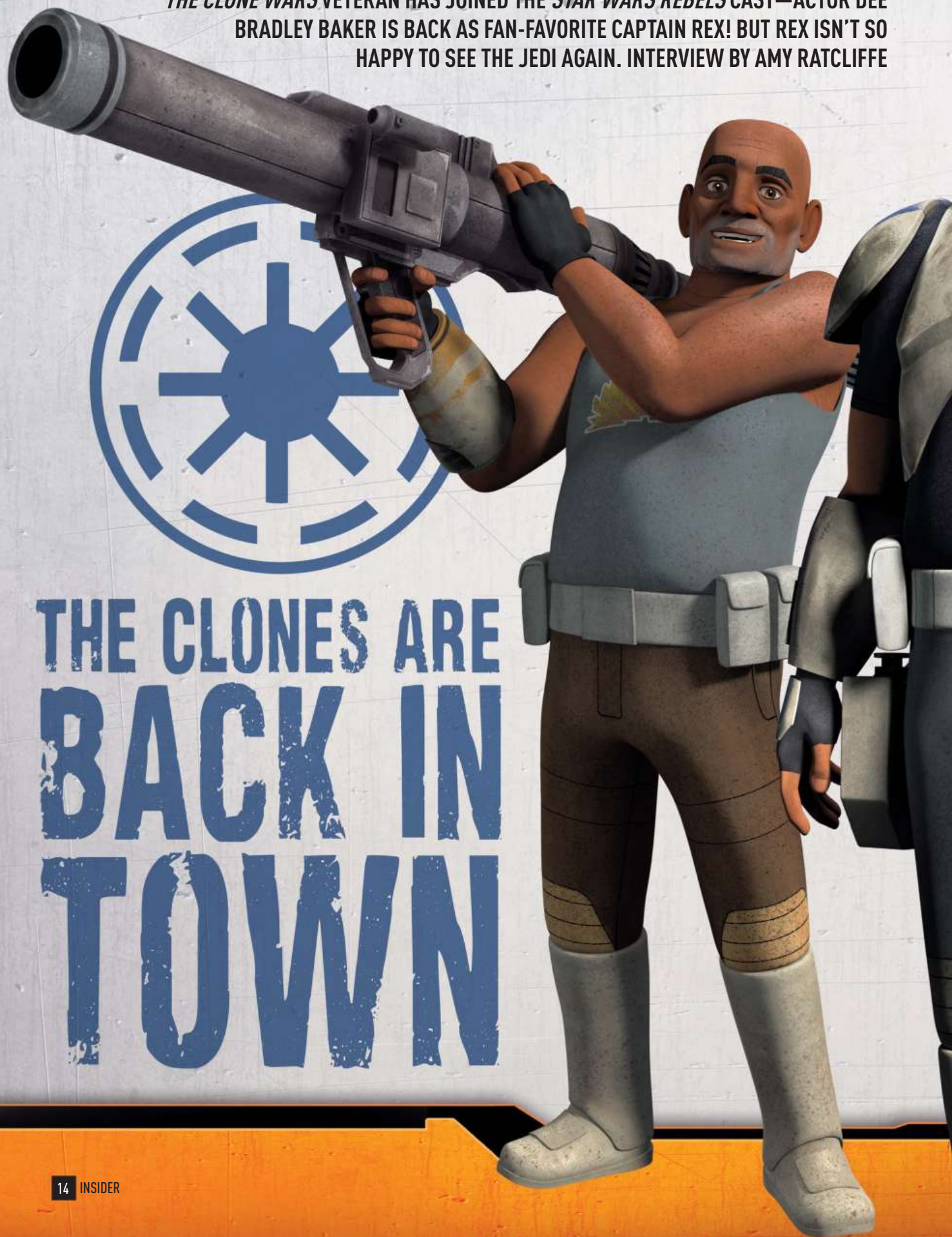
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HOT ON THE HEELS OF ASHLEY ECKSTEIN'S SURPRISE RETURN AS AHSOKA, ANOTHER *STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS* VETERAN HAS JOINED THE *STAR WARS REBELS* CAST—ACTOR DEE BRADLEY BAKER IS BACK AS FAN-FAVORITE CAPTAIN REX! BUT REX ISN'T SO HAPPY TO SEE THE JEDI AGAIN. INTERVIEW BY AMY RATCLIFFE



THE CLONES ARE
BACK IN
TOWN



Star Wars Insider: Let's jump back to Celebration. The second the crowd heard, "My name is Rex" in the *Star Wars Rebels* Season Two trailer, they lost it. What was your reaction to that?

Dee Bradley Baker: Well, that was my favorite moment, but I guess that's understandable. I've been waiting for that moment for a very long time. Ever since they announced that *The Clone*



Wars was over and that George Lucas was stepping away, I really felt like my childhood had ended and that I'd moved on to another chapter in my life. It hit me, it felt a little sad, and I thought maybe that was going to be that. But then, I got the call from Dave Filoni and we started back in with Rex as an old timer as well as a couple of other clones, and it really made me feel good. I felt good for myself selfishly, but I also felt really good for the fans and for everything that had been created with *Clone Wars* and built up around the clones and how compelling and interesting their lives and their stories are. To have them brought back into the story of *Star Wars*—it's really fulfilling and really fun. It's a marvelous moment for everyone



involved in making that show. I think it's great for a voice actor to get credit for the character, but I try not to forget that it really is a team effort of everyone from the writers to the producers, to all the technicians and artists that make every single frame of this work. It's really to everyone's credit that people love the show.

We imagine Rex, Wolffe, and Gregor are trying to stay off the Empire's radar, but we know from the Season Two trailer they're helping Ahsoka to some degree. What motivates them to risk being discovered?

First of all, I think these soldiers are trained to do the right thing. They are not just trained to protect and coming out of Order 66, they want to not just blindly follow orders—they want to do the right thing. With Rex as their leader they have a real connection and trust with Ahsoka. They have the attitude of, "Any friend of Ahsoka's a friend of mine." So once you add those

two things together, and then you dial in the Empire coming for their newfound friends, the clones are not going to turn tail and run. Now, they are sort of deciding to do that on their own—they are not being ordered to do it; they decided.

"WITH REX AS THEIR LEADER, THE CLONES HAVE A REAL CONNECTION AND TRUST WITH AHSOKA."

In the show's timeline, it's been roughly 15 years since we've seen these guys. How have they changed?

They've gained a few pounds and their personalities have sharpened—or veered, in the case of some [laughs]! Rex is pretty

straight ahead still, but Wolffe is more of what Wolffe always was and Gregor has become a little goofy. He is kind of the wacky uncle of the bunch now. But they are still soldiers, only they are kind of applying those instincts and those abilities to the ability to hunt. It's almost like they are driving around in the wilderness in an RV with the fishing lines. They're just out there fishing and setting camp fires and trying to bag the big one, and that's kind of how they fulfill that old, baked in need to hunt and to go get the others. I'm glad that Dave Filoni and company felt confident enough to take these guys in a fresh direction, with the fresh series and a fresh energy.

Since they have aged, what technical differences did you have to apply to your performance?

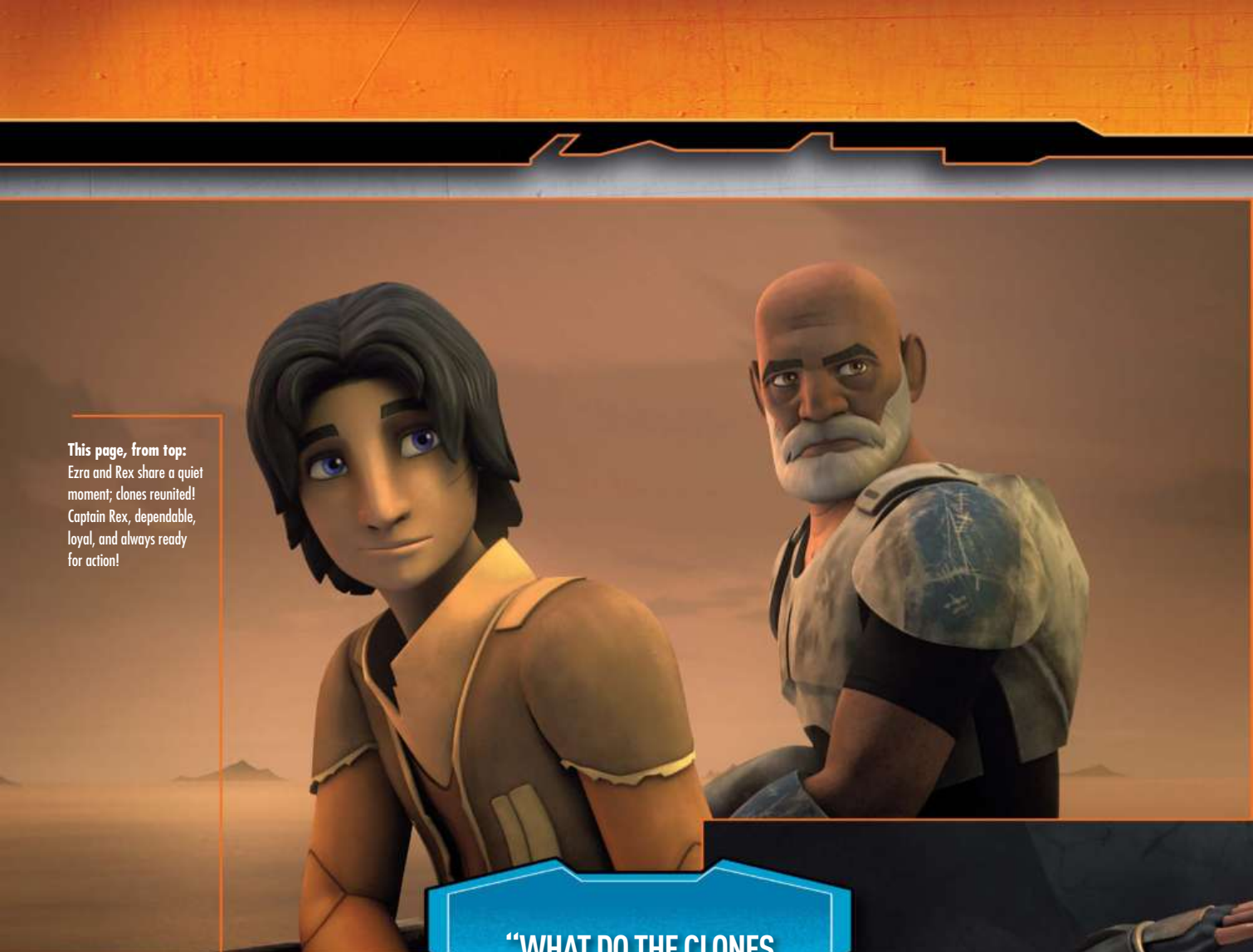


I tried to add more roughness in there, but a lot of that would fall away once they're energized by the fight. It felt to me like they started rougher at the beginning of the particular episode where they're introduced and then as it plays out, they are closer to being who they were and what they used to be in their glory days—and that's in particular Wolffe and Rex. Now, Gregor is a little bit different. The thing that I imagine is that he was a little shell-shocked from the final moment that we saw him in *Clone Wars*, and so his voice is a little more rickety than the other two. So I had to separate him a little bit further to match how Dave wanted me to take that. At first, I was a little hesitant to do that because part of my job has always been to make these guys distinct, but to make them sound the way they had in previous episodes. That's what was unique about this new beginning, and that the mission for me was a little different where I had to deviate a little from what I had already established.

Given Kanan's history with clones, he's probably not the most trusting of Rex. What's their relationship like?

You'll see that Rex and Kanan don't quite get along. Kanan is not like Anakin (in a lot of ways) and he also doesn't particularly care for Rex. Kanan hasn't really earned Rex's respect yet. Rex has seen a lot, and Kanan is relatively inexperienced, so they

From opposite page, far left top: Rex under Anakin Skywalker's command on the planet Christophsis; Obi-Wan takes command in the investigation at Glid station; the horror of Order 66 revealed.

A large illustration at the top of the page shows Ezra and Rex in a desert landscape. Ezra, on the left, has dark hair and blue eyes, wearing a brown tunic. Rex, on the right, is an older man with a white beard and a weathered face, wearing a grey and black armor with a blue planet emblem on his shoulder. They are both looking towards the right.

This page, from top:
Ezra and Rex share a quiet moment; clones reunited! Captain Rex, dependable, loyal, and always ready for action!

both have to earn each other's trust. There is a nice episode or two where that is exactly what the episode is about; it's those two guys going on a mission together and just trying to sort things out. I really like seeing that side of both of their characters—where they are in it together, but are also sort of against each other and they are trying to make it all work out.

There's a great part in the trailer where Rex sneers at the stormtroopers. What is his attitude towards these soldiers?

The Empire completely betrayed him—they are behind all of this. I don't know the extent of all the machinations behind that, but the clones' attitude to the Empire is going to be, "Either stay away, or we're coming for you." And

"WHAT DO THE CLONES KNOW? WHAT DO THEY REMEMBER?"

they're not afraid. When they face down the Imperial Walker and a bunch of stormtroopers, I think that *they* think of the stormtroopers as derivative soldiers. They're not the born and bred fighters that the clones originally were at all. The clones definitely look down on these types, and so they welcome the fight.

Will we get inside the clones' heads and learn more about what they think of the Jedi?
That's actually part of what's interesting about what's



unfolding—not just for the clones, but also, for instance, Ahsoka. What do they know? What do they remember? What is it that they are putting together as this continues to unfold? That's a very interesting question, and I think that's part of what this series will have to address. We have seen already that Vader knows that Ahsoka is alive—and I don't know if Ahsoka understands what the situation is with that. This is just purely my speculation, but she may have been so traumatized by how that all played out that she may not see the connection with what actually happened with her former Master.

You've voiced a handful of characters in *Rebels*, such as Ezra's father and Old Jho.

Will you continue those roles in *Season Two*?

Yes. I'm trying to think, there is an occasional fighter pilot, Old Jho, Admiral Konstantine—those are still peppered in there. I'm sort of sprinkled in a lot of the episodes, not all of them, but a number of them. And it's very exciting and very

thrilling for me to still be part of it. It's a great journey, and I think the fans are really going to love, more and more, the leaps and bounds that are coming with the storytelling, and also, just the increasingly impressive visuals. 🌀

MORE TO SAY

Star Wars Rebels can be seen on Disney XD.

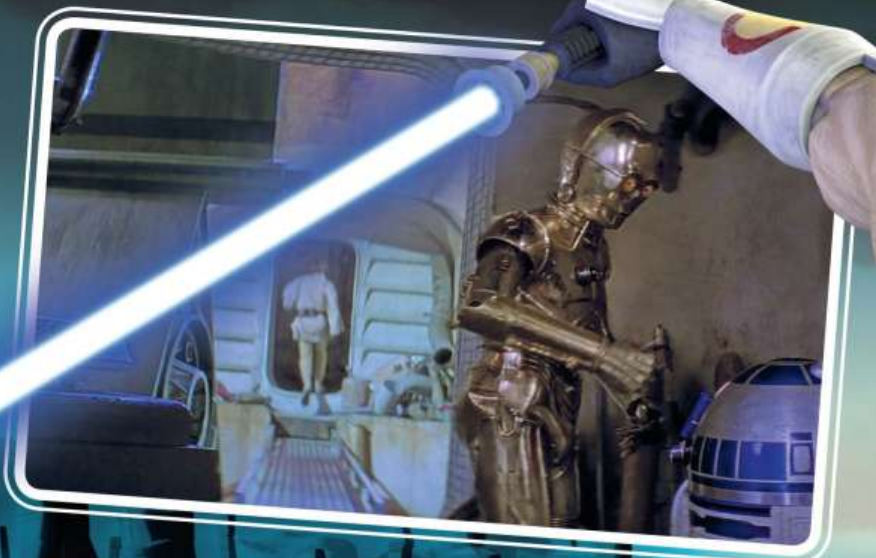
See Dee's guide to working as a voice artist here:
<http://iwanttobeavoicetactor.com>

HAVE YOU?





JAMES ARNOLD TAYLOR IS KNOWN AND LOVED BY *STAR WARS* FANS FOR HIS VOICE ARTIST WORK AS OBI-WAN KENOBI IN *STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS*. BUT HE AND *STAR WARS* GO A LONG WAY BACK—TO 1977, IN FACT! INTERVIEW BY MARK NEWBOLD.



Can you remember where you saw *Star Wars* for the first time?

I was seven years old and I saw it in a drive-in movie theater in San Jose, California, with my mother, and older brother and sister. While they all enjoyed the film, I think I was the only one that felt it's full impact and how it would change more than just the face of movie-making, but the imaginations of generations to come.

What was it that first grabbed you about *Star Wars*?

While the popular answer may be Han Solo, and, yes, Han was the one I loved to pretend to be, I'd have to say Luke Skywalker had the largest impact right off the bat. He was the character that represented every kid dreaming of a bigger and more exciting life.

When did you first become aware of *Star Wars* fandom?

That's a two-part answer: Firstly, when I was seven and I instantly became a fan along with all my friends; secondly, seeing it from

a completely different level as the actor portraying Obi-Wan. The excitement, love, and enthusiasm of fans all over the world has impacted my own even more than I ever could have imagined as that seven-year-old.

Do you have a favorite line from the films?

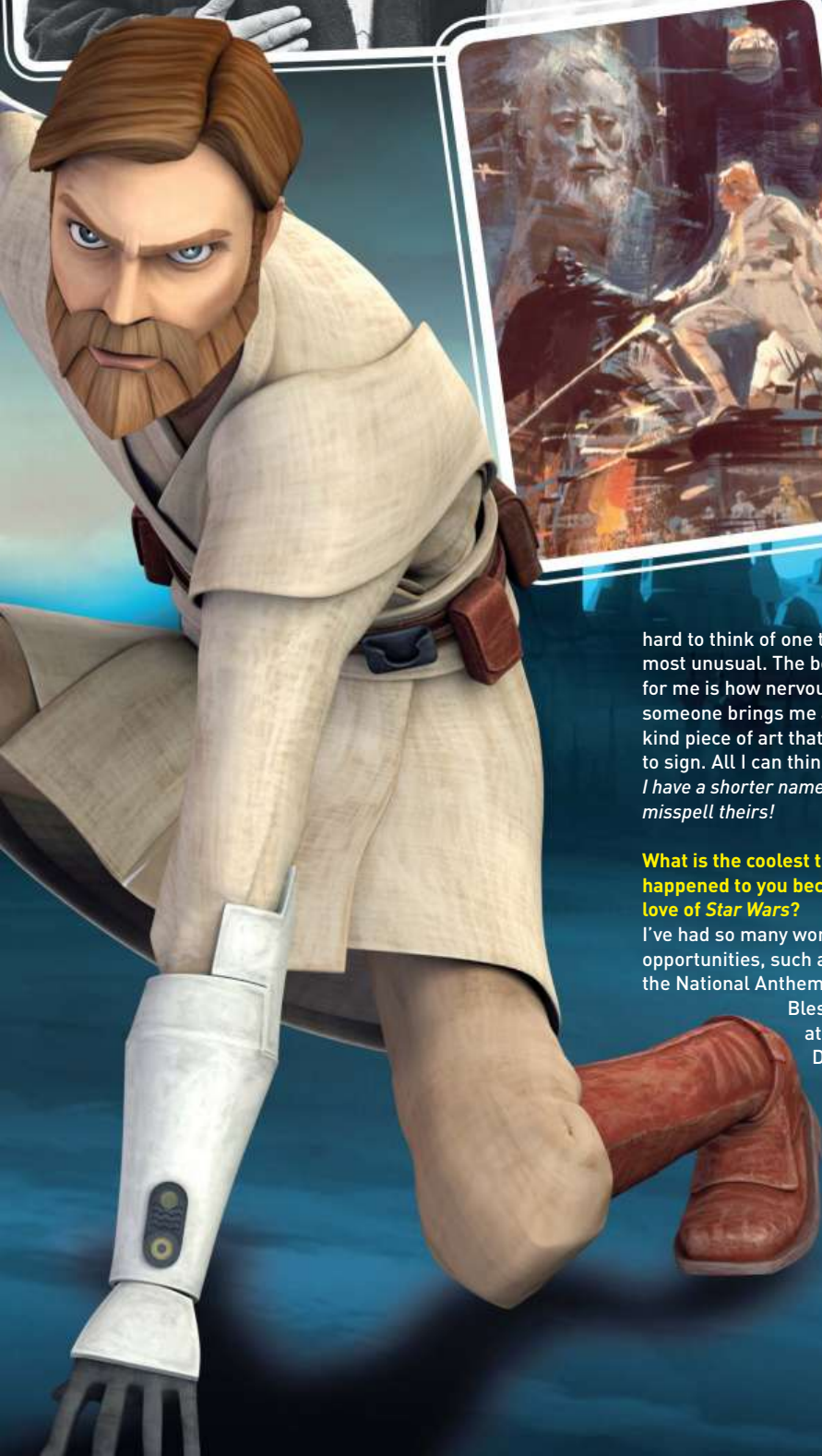
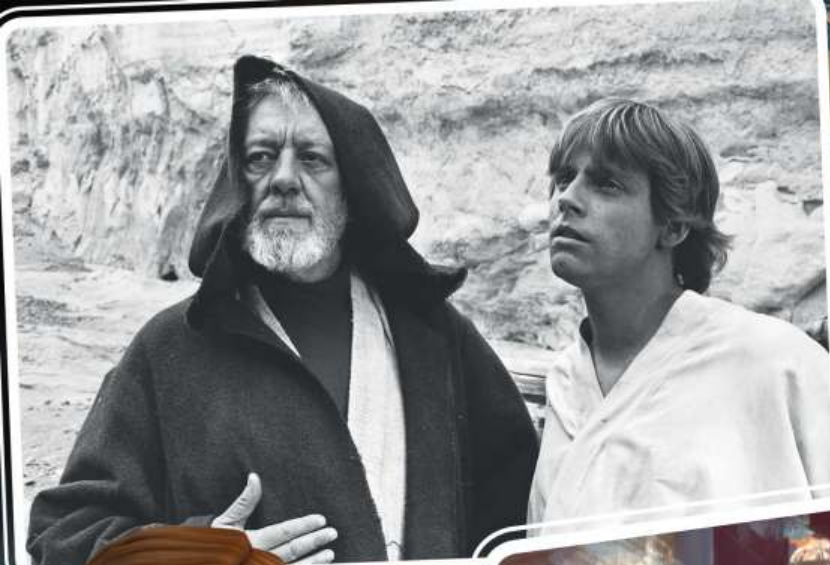
I've been fortunate enough to say one of the most famous lines, "I have a bad feeling about this" more than anyone, but an all-time personal favorite line would have to be from *A New Hope* when the droids are having a conversation after being acquired by their new master, Luke Skywalker. See-Threepio tells Artoo that he doesn't believe Luke likes him very much and then adds insult to injury with, "No, I don't like you either." It's the little droid's sorrowful response that is my favorite, a sad little sound that says it all.

Can you reveal something about yourself that will surprise *Star Wars* fans?

In this day and age of social media, it's hard to have a secret, especially for someone like myself who tries to be as open as possible. As the fortunate soul that gets to host so many *Star Wars* events, it's hard to find anything in my memory banks that might not be known. I've never read the books, nor seen a single *Harry Potter* film. I'm just saving something for my old age, I guess.

What is the most unusual thing you have autographed?

That's tough, as I've signed so many things it's



hard to think of one that is the most unusual. The better one for me is how nervous I get when someone brings me a one-of-a-kind piece of art that they want me to sign. All I can think is, *Why can't I have a shorter name and Don't misspell theirs!*

What is the coolest thing that's happened to you because of your love of *Star Wars*?

I've had so many wonderful opportunities, such as singing the National Anthem and God Bless America at a sold-out Dodgers game. Hosting Disney's *Star Wars*

Weekends five years in a row, and the last two *Star Wars* Celebrations in the United States. I love getting to interview just about every person in the *Star Wars* universe and feeling their impact on it all. Traveling the world and performing for our troops. But the coolest would be sharing that galaxy far, far away with my daughter and seeing her imagination grow from it all.

What is your favorite *Star Wars* film?

I'm asked this quite often and my answer changes from time to time. Presently, I'm back to *A New Hope*. I was watching it the other week and was struck, once again, by its magic, and was transported back to being that seven-year-old that first saw it so many years ago. 🌟

MORE TO SAY

Follow James on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jatactor>

HAVE YOU?

CHUCK WENDIG'S WAR

THE DAUNTING TASK OF CONTINUING THE *STAR WARS* SAGA AFTER THE EVENTS OF *RETURN OF THE JEDI* FELL TO AUTHOR CHUCK WENDIG WITH HIS NEW NOVEL, *AFTERMATH*. BUT IT WAS AN ASSIGNMENT HE WAS MORE THAN READY FOR! INTERVIEW: JONATHAN WILKINS

S*tar Wars Insider*: You campaigned for the chance to write a *Star Wars* novel. Why was it so important to you?
Chuck Wendig: I grew up with this stuff. It's not just in my blood—it's in my DNA. I pretty much was born at the same time *Star Wars* was, and it permeated my existence as a kid. And now, as an adult.

As a nice bonus, I was four when I first saw a *Star Wars* movie (*The Empire Strikes Back*) and my son is now the same age. The timing is impeccable, and I of course assume that Lucasfilm planned it to accommodate my own personal timeline. Thanks, guys!

Where did the story come from?

Part of this novel is a story that's lived in my headspace for a couple of decades, so when I was called to pitch a narrative, it was easy to squeeze my head like a grapefruit and see what juice came out of it. But also it's a story set for now, not just thirty years ago—it tackles issues of war and post-traumatic stress disorder, but also asks questions about family and loyalty.

How much leeway did you get in terms of story? What kind of directives were set by the Lucasfilm team?

They gave me a surprising amount of leeway. They asked me to pitch a story, and I did, and that story is (for the most part) what you'll read. The directives were to keep it within a certain timeframe and with a new cast of characters (again, for the most part).

Was it daunting having the responsibility of continuing the saga beyond *Return of the Jedi*?

It wasn't at first, if only because even though it was pitched that way, I don't think I realized what exactly I was doing—meaning, writing the first freshly canonical set of novels post-Episode VI. I knew there were all these cataclysmic things I was dealing with, but I didn't really grasp the vital significance of that until after it was written and people started getting *really excited*.

Is there a particular character that you enjoyed writing in the book?

The character of Sinjir is too much fun to write—an Imperial loyalty officer gone way off the reservation? He's drunk and traumatized, and left with a major shift in his outlook for the galaxy and the Empire? Too much fun. But, there's another character of note that I loved writing even more—a murderous battle droid sidekick named Mister Bones...

JOURNEY TO STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

THE WAR IS NOT OVER.

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...

STAR WAR AFTERMATH

CHUCK WENDIG

JOURNEY TO AFTERMATH

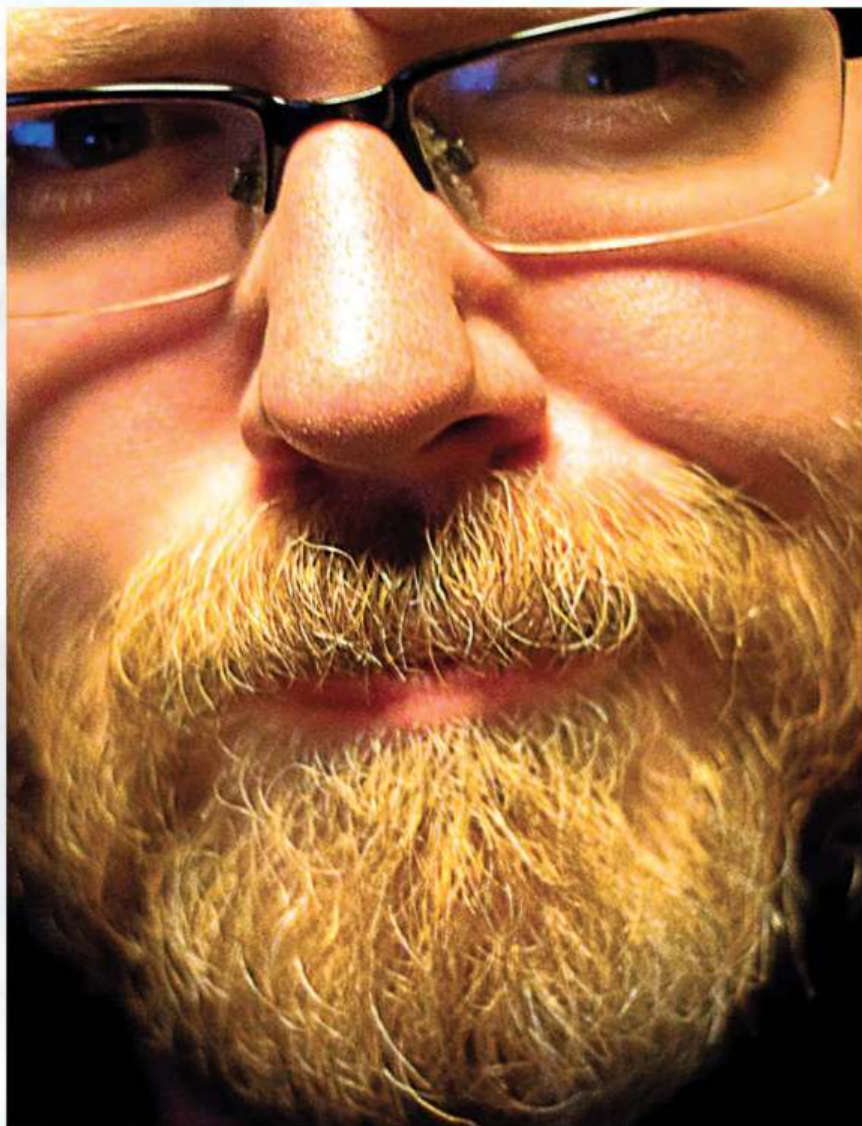
Chuck Wendig is the author of the novels: *Blackbirds*, *Mockingbird*, *Blue Blazes*, *Double Dead*, *Bait Dog*, *Dinocalypse Now*, *Beyond Dinocalypse*, and *Gods & Monsters: Unclean Spirits*. His novel *Under the Empyrean Sky* caught the eye of Del Rey editor Shelly Shapiro who chose him to write the highly anticipated *Star Wars: Aftermath*.

Is there a character who is particularly hard to write for?

Any time there's a legendary character on the page—such as Wedge or Ackbar—it's tough just before you write them because there's a lot of expectation. These characters have a legacy, they carry a kind of narrative weight. Though once you crack the case and get into putting their voice on the page, it gets a lot easier. Ackbar in particular surprised me at how easy it was to slip into his voice.

Of the new characters in the book, who are you most hoping will take off with fans?

Norra and her son, Temmin, are the heart and soul of the piece. A mother separated from her now-teen son? And *she's* the one swooping in and doing the rescuing (of her



“ANY TIME THERE’S A LEGENDARY CHARACTER ON THE PAGE—SUCH AS ACKBAR OR WEDGE—IT’S TOUGH BECAUSE THERE’S A LOT OF EXPECTATION.”





son and of Wedge); and a son who resists her? It's great drama. I love the interplay and heart of the two characters.

As an established writer, what surprised you most about writing *Star Wars*?

It was easy! I don't mean like, dumb easy or that I wrote it with my eyes closed—I just mean, given all that narrative weight I mentioned earlier I thought that I'd be paralyzed by the opportunity. But I wasn't. I wrote it so fast it was like Artoo-Detoo rocketing up out of the Dagobah murk. It was practically purgative.

Which, I guess, is what happens when you've been brining your gray matter in all things *Star Wars* for over three decades.

You have written for all sorts of media. Which are you most comfortable with?

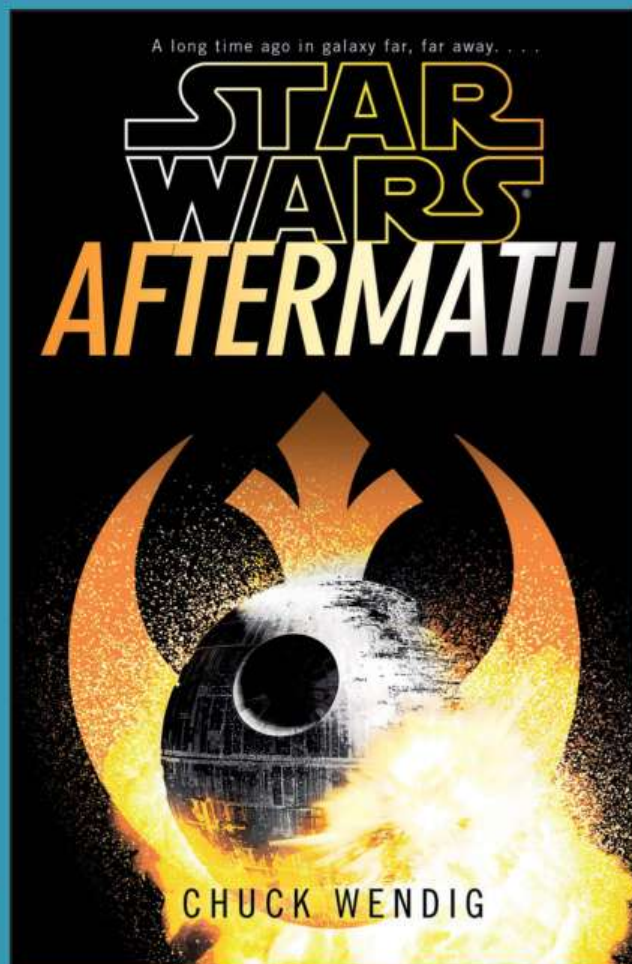
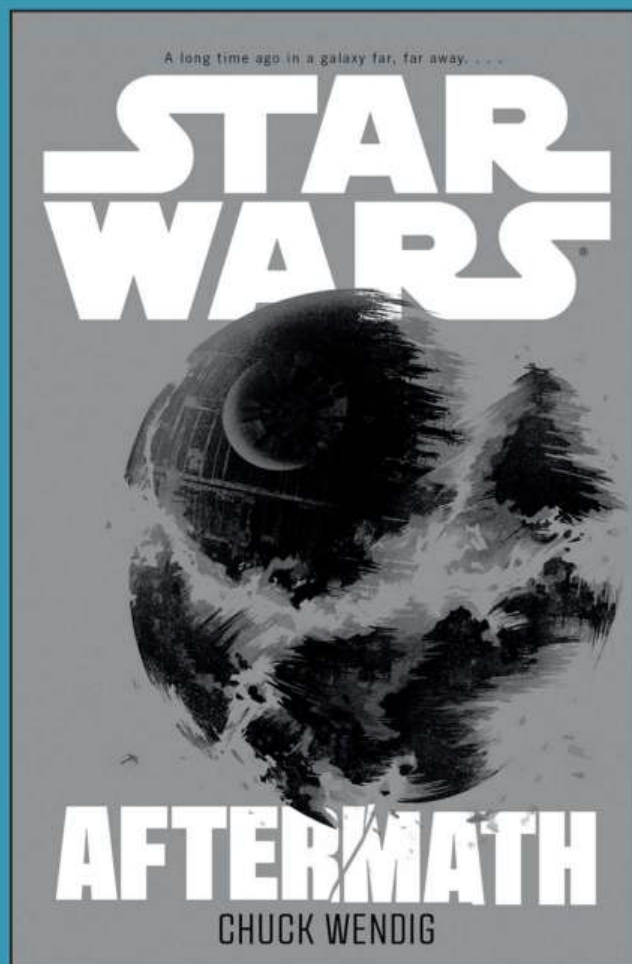
Novels are my comfort zone because it's what I've always wanted to do. But I'm getting into comics, now, too, and I've picked up a few gigs. Maybe it's time to start campaigning to write some *Star Wars* comics?

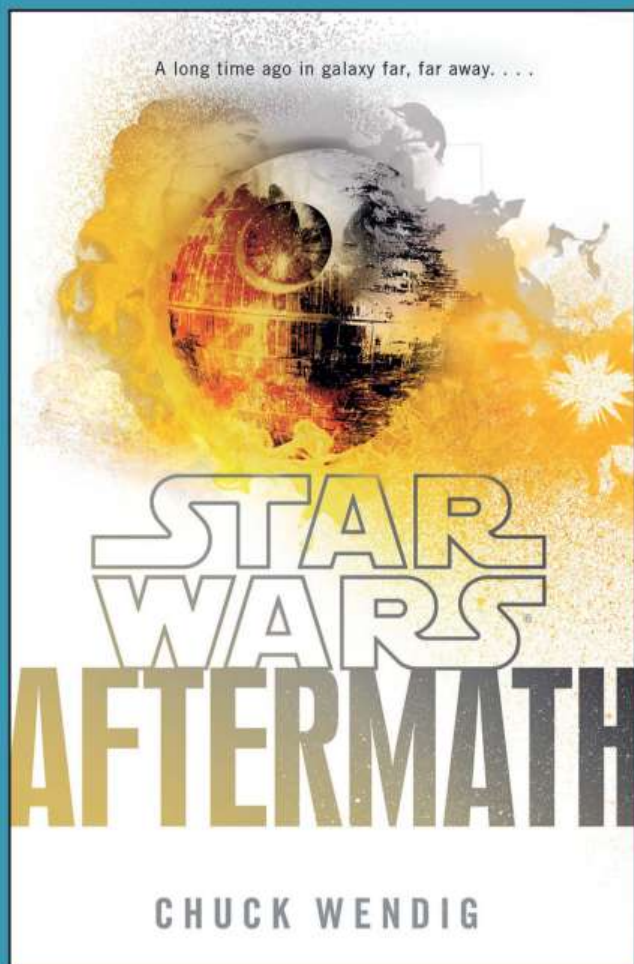
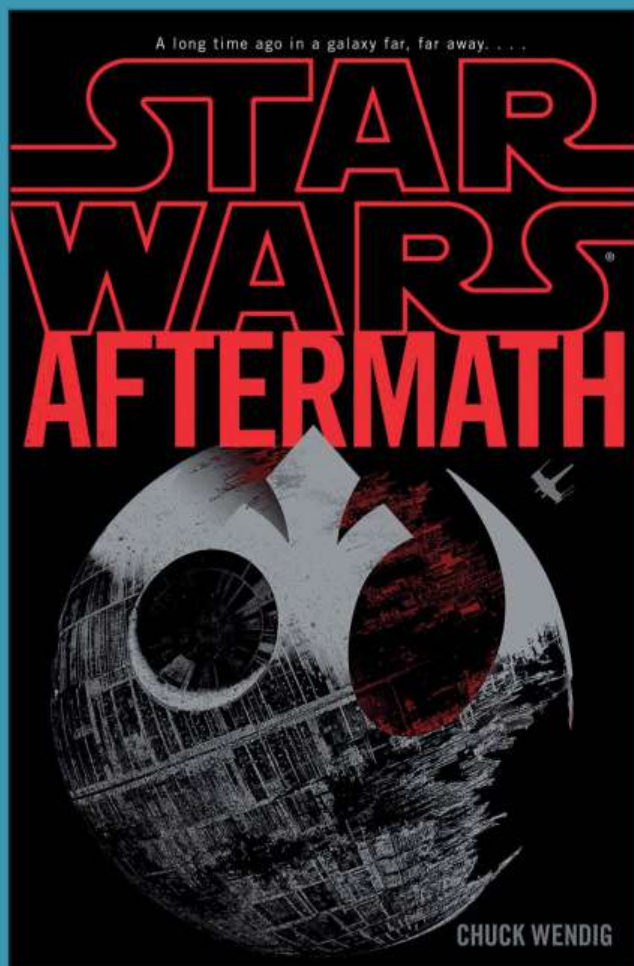
Is there a *Star Wars* character that you'd like to write, but haven't yet?

A wacky road trip adventure with the Dianoga, Chief Chirpa, and the Sad Rancor Keeper Who Probably Has A Name But I'm Too Lazy To Look It Up [Editor: Our teary, monster-loving friend is called Malakili!]. Or, more seriously—less a character and more a time-frame. I'd love to write books set during the Old Republic.

BUILDING THE COVER: COVER DESIGNER SCOTT BIEL

"With the cover for *Star Wars: Aftermath*, we wanted to convey that the story takes place immediately after the end of *Return of the Jedi*, and we also wanted the imagery to be something iconic and dynamic. Phantom City Creative did the first comp and I did the second. We thought they were fun and interesting, but they were a little too abstract. I went back to create something where the second Death Star was more recognizable and worked up a variety of different options (on the right and far right). We are so excited with the final cover and feel it's a bold new look for *Star Wars*."





GET READY FOR AFTERMATH

The second Death Star has been destroyed, the Emperor killed, and Darth Vader struck down. All devastating blows against the Empire, and major victories for the Rebel Alliance. But the battle for freedom is far from over. As the Empire reels from its critical defeat at the Battle of Endor, the Rebel Alliance—now a fledgling New Republic—presses its advantage by hunting down the enemy's scattered forces before they can regroup and retaliate. But above the remote planet Akiva, an ominous show of the enemy's strength is unfolding. Out on a lone reconnaissance mission, pilot Wedge Antilles watches Imperial Star Destroyers gather like birds of prey circling for a kill, but is taken captive before he can report back to the New Republic's leaders.

Meanwhile, on the planet's surface, former rebel fighter Norra Wexley has returned to her native world—war weary, ready to reunite with her estranged son, and eager to build a new life in some distant place. But when Norra intercepts Wedge Antilles' urgent distress call, she realizes her time as a freedom fighter is not yet over. What she doesn't know is just how close the enemy is—or how decisive and dangerous her new mission will be.

Determined to preserve the Empire's power, the surviving Imperial elite are converging on Akiva for a top-secret emergency summit—to consolidate their forces and rally for a counterstrike. But they haven't reckoned on Norra and her newfound allies—her technical genius son, a Zabrak bounty hunter, and a reprobate Imperial defector—who are prepared to do whatever they must to end the Empire's oppressive reign once and for all...

"A SMALL GROUP OF DEDICATED PEOPLE CAN CHANGE AN ENTIRE GALAXY."

Or, further flung and closer to Episode VII—during the New Republic. Even more uncharted territory!

You've mentioned that your son is nearly at an age where he can enjoy *Star Wars*. What do you hope he will be able to take from the saga?

The greatest lesson I take from *Star Wars*, and I hope he takes, too, is that even a small group of dedicated people—friends, really—can change an entire galaxy. How wonderful is that? And history upholds this thesis—it's not just

the fabrication of this particular universe.

Will this be your final *Star Wars* book?

Turns out, they're letting me write the next two books in the *Aftermath* trilogy—so, you've got me for at least a couple more years! 🍌

MORE TO SAY

Star Wars: Aftermath by Chuck Wendig is available now.

Visit his website at <http://terribleminds.com>

HAVE YOU?

JEDL TOY BOX

IN A NEW SERIES, *STAR WARS INSIDER* LOOKS AT THE STORY BEHIND CLASSIC COLLECTIBLES. WHERE BETTER TO START THAN WITH THE CLASSIC KENNER 3¾" ACTION FIGURE LINE—FEATURING THE MUCH-LOVED TELESCOPING LIGHTSABERS?

The first four *Star Wars* figures ever made were Chewbacca, R2-D2, Princess Leia, and Luke Skywalker. Included in the legendary Early Bird Kit, these four were sent to kids in the mail in the early months of 1978. While three of the four were standard figures, the Luke was special as his lightsaber was an early Kenner design that was soon discarded. Rather than the single-piece saber, the Early Bird Luke had a two-piece saber: a main shaft that slid in and out of the arm, and a smaller filament that slid in and out of the shaft. Collectors have come to call this the Double Telescoping lightsaber (or DT for short).

When Kenner was creating product concepts for the action figures, Bernie Loomis, the president of the company at the time, wanted the saber to magically appear in the figure's hand. Several concepts were prototyped to achieve this goal, including one saber that would wind up around a spool inside the figure. The problem with this design was that when extended, the lightsaber retained a curved shape—not exactly movie accurate!

The best idea was a two-piece saber. Engineering this was difficult, however; at the 3¾" size, the plastic for the saber was very thin and fragile. To keep the small filament from simply falling out of the larger shaft, Kenner had two designs. The first was the "mushroom tip," where the tip of the filament was melted into a small dome or "mushroom" shape after being installed into the larger shaft. This approach never worked as the melting made the small filament even more fragile than it



BERNIE LOOMIS, THE PRESIDENT OF KENNER, WANTED THE LIGHTSABER TO MAGICALLY APPEAR.

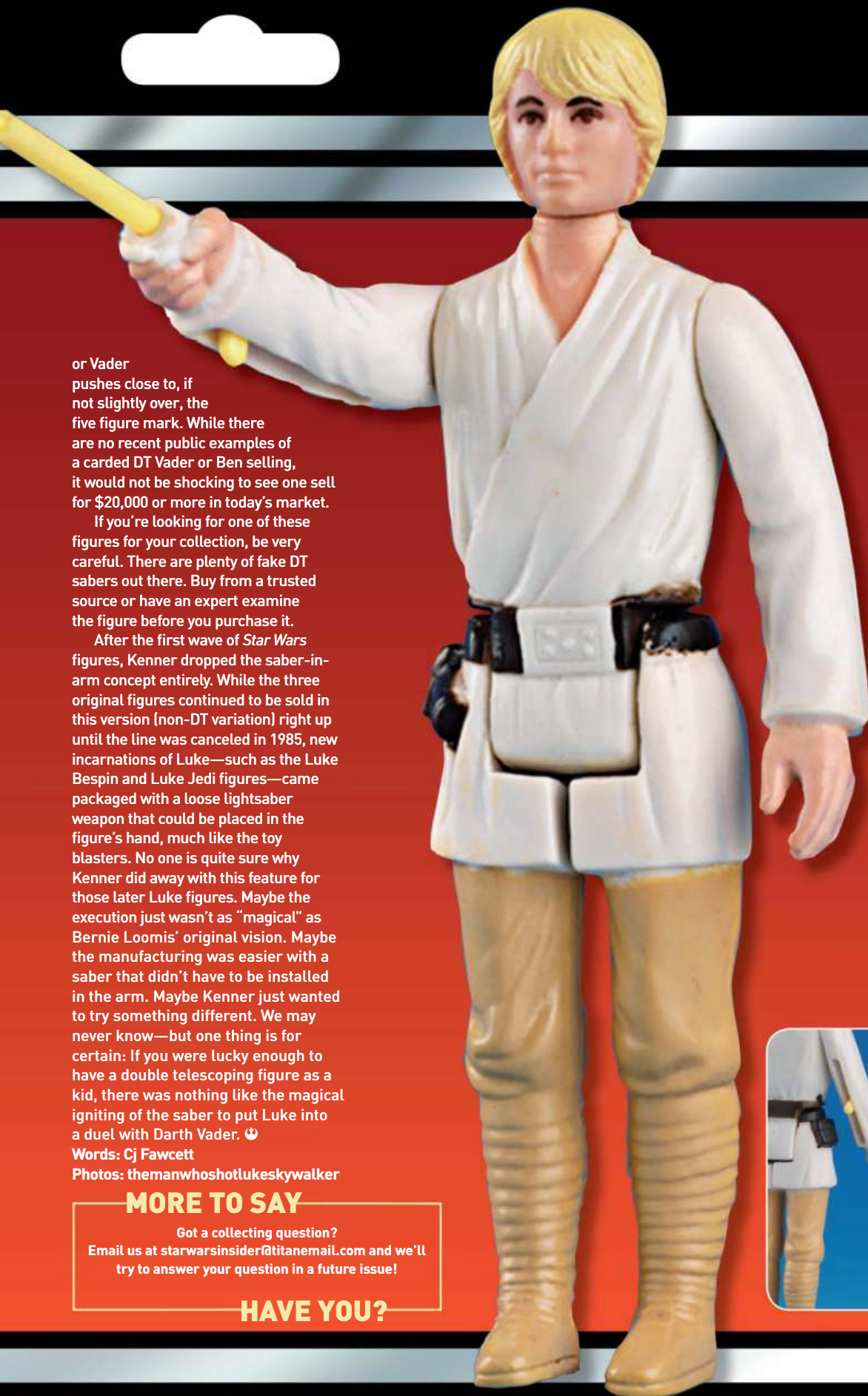
already was. The final design was just to mold a slight kink in the tip of the saber, which kept the filament from falling out, but left Luke with a bent light blade. Not only was the double telescoping saber design a problem in manufacturing, but

the toy also broke easily during play, violating the "Long Play Toy" claim Kenner advertised on its packaging at the time.

Thus, the double telescoping feature was revised into the standard one-piece saber most common on the Ben and Vader figures. Blueprint change drawings have surfaced showing a change date in mid-November of 1977, well before the Early Bird kits were shipped. So, Kenner already knew the feature was not going to survive.

While the majority of DT Lukes came in the Early Bird kit, some of these also ended up on cardbacks at retail. This variant is exceedingly rare and, while there is no solid count, experts suspect that less than 25 remain in existence today. The loose version is fairly common and can be found regularly in the market for \$150-\$200, but carded examples are pushing the \$10,000 mark.

Even rarer are the DT Ben and Vader figures. Kenner produced some Bens and Vaders with the double telescoping lightsabers early in the production process prior to making the change, though far less were produced than the Luke figure. Most of the examples in collectors' hands today came through Kenner sources as loose figures, but there are a few examples of carded DT Bens and Vaders, and at least one example with a store price sticker, proving these figures did make it to retail. The scarcity of DT Ben and Vader cannot be overstated. Most likely fewer than 30 loose examples exist for each figure, and the number of carded examples can be counted on your fingers. Loose, the price of a DT Ben



or Vader pushes close to, if not slightly over, the five figure mark. While there are no recent public examples of a carded DT Vader or Ben selling, it would not be shocking to see one sell for \$20,000 or more in today's market.

If you're looking for one of these figures for your collection, be very careful. There are plenty of fake DT sabers out there. Buy from a trusted source or have an expert examine the figure before you purchase it.

After the first wave of *Star Wars* figures, Kenner dropped the saber-in-arm concept entirely. While the three original figures continued to be sold in this version (non-DT variation) right up until the line was canceled in 1985, new incarnations of Luke—such as the Luke Bispin and Luke Jedi figures—came packaged with a loose lightsaber weapon that could be placed in the figure's hand, much like the toy blasters. No one is quite sure why Kenner did away with this feature for those later Luke figures. Maybe the execution just wasn't as "magical" as Bernie Loomis' original vision. Maybe the manufacturing was easier with a saber that didn't have to be installed in the arm. Maybe Kenner just wanted to try something different. We may never know—but one thing is for certain: If you were lucky enough to have a double telescoping figure as a kid, there was nothing like the magical igniting of the saber to put Luke into a duel with Darth Vader. ☺

Words: Cj Fawcett

Photos: themanwhoshotlukeskywalker

MORE TO SAY

Got a collecting question? Email us at starwarsinsider@titanemail.com and we'll try to answer your question in a future issue!

HAVE YOU?





THE EVENTS OF THIS STORY TIE IN WITH
STAR WARS: AFTERMATH BY CHUCK WENDIG,
AVAILABLE NOW FROM DEL REY BOOKS!

EXCLUSIVE FICTION

BLADE SQUADRON: ZERO HOUR

BY DAVID J. WILLIAMS AND MARK S. WILLIAMS
WITH ART BY CHRIS TREVAS

The planet's vast wall of huge, swirling storm clouds looked like infinity itself: It filled the view, broken only by the patches of orange-gray terrain visible here and there beneath the roiling weather. Gina Moonsong accelerated her B-wing to attack speed as the rest of her squadron fell into formation behind her. She gritted her teeth and opened her comlink.

"All units, on my mark... three... two... one... mark."

The battle-computers of the B-wings synced; the next moment, over a dozen ion cannon beams converged at precisely the same coordinates on the planetary shield that protected Malastare. For a moment a portion of that shield flickered into the visible spectrum—and then splintered, disrupting just long enough for the squadron to pass through. Moonsong felt the chop as her ship passed through the compromised shield. All around, her pilots were struggling to maintain an ever-more precise heading as they vectored through the shield's weakest portion—a struggle that grew increasingly desperate as the atmosphere built and the gravity intensified. For one ship it was too much: Moonsong watched on her screens as the electromagnetic surge of the flickering shield caught the tail of Blade 7, whipping the ship back up against the deadly wall, fireballing the craft before Karls even knew what hit him. Moonsong cursed under her breath even as she checked that Fanty was still in position on her wing, that Stramm and the rest of the Squadron were right behind. They had penetrated the planet's first line of defense but were continuing to struggle against the overwhelming force of the maelstrom.

And it was about to get a lot worse.

"Blade Five to Blade Three; I count at least a dozen TIE fighters inbound." The coolness in Cutter Poole's voice belied his complete lack of experience in battle.

"There sure are a lot of them..." Blade Six chimed in.

"Charge defectors to full," said Moonsong. "Let's do what you were trained for."

Yet even as the defectors went up, and her reflexes took over, she felt her mind going back to events after the destruction of the second Death Star. It was so recent and yet it seemed like such an eternity ago...

The ceremony on the flight deck was short and to the point. Some admiral (whom Moonsong had never heard of) droned on about duty, sacrifice and heroism before proceeding to award the B-wing pilots who had survived the Battle of Endor their Medals of Bravery. Moonsong couldn't help but think they should have given them to the pilots who didn't make it. It made her promotion to lieutenant feel more than a little hollow. The only happiness Moonsong took in any of it was that Braylen Stramm had been promoted to wing commander. As the ceremony participants headed back to their duty stations, Moonsong made her way over to him. She gave him a lopsided smile and a jaunty salute, both of which he returned with less than the usual enthusiasm. In that moment, she knew everything—almost like they were playing out roles that had already been rehearsed.

"The medal looks good on you, Commander," he said.

She wasn't going to let him duck out of this. She looked around to see that nobody was in earshot—then moved closer.

"What's on your mind?" she asked.

"Nothing," he replied.

"We both know that's not true."

Stramm looked past her at the confetti dangling from the rafters.

"I'm not sure how to say it."

"I'll say it for you. You think your promotion means that we have to stop seeing each other."

"It does," he replied.

"That's a ton of bunk," she said evenly. "You're scared of how serious we've become."

"Of course I'm scared," he shot back. "Scared of having to choose

between you and the rest of the squad."

"Sounds like you already have."

"Gina, I may have to order you to do something that might... well, if that day comes I don't want to doubt whether I'd give the order or if you would even follow it."

"I'd follow it. You know I would."

"That's my point," he said—and when she didn't reply: "I—look, we can figure things out between us when the war is over."

"The war is over," she said.

"It's not." He sat down on the edge of the stage, let his feet dangle—for just a moment, he looked like a helpless child. "I shouldn't be telling you this, but... the Imperials aren't beaten. What looked like just a rearguard action is turning out

**"CHARGE DEFLECTORS TO FULL,"
SAID MOONSONG. "LET'S DO
WHAT YOU WERE TRAINED FOR."**

to be something more serious. All leave is getting canceled and Blade Squadron is getting a fresh batch of recruits. And I need you to train them. Okay?"

She smiled with a calmness that she knew he could see right through. "Okay," she said.

Stramm and his B-wings peeled off, deploying their ECM packages while Moonsong led the rest of the squadron straight down on the incoming TIE fighters. Blade Squadron's penetration of the planetary shield had woken everybody up planetside, but hopefully they were going to be focused on her and not Stramm. Fany's voice echoed through the squadron's headsets.

"Stand by for ground-hogs...." Moonsong smiled grimly. Ground-hogs was the nickname for the Imperial pilots who flew planetary atmospheric missions. Steering a TIE fighter through the mess of a planet's atmosphere was tougher than it looked, and the Ground-hogs made it look easy. Even with all the terrible weather, the B-wing's battle computers showed them in a tight formation and closing fast. Over the years the 'Hogs had developed skills and tactics that made them as dangerous as any type of combat pilot you could think of. And right now Moonsong wasn't thinking of anything else; she pushed the stick forward, diving down to intercept the incoming TIEs in what was arguably the most gut-wrenching part of Stramm's plan. Her battle computer indicated that Stramm's ships were vectoring straight in toward the target, unnoticed by the TIEs or the ground defense batteries. She and her pilots had the Imperials' undivided attention.

"Initiate maneuver orenth," she barked—and her B-wings initiated a steep loop that took them away from the TIE fighters, giving the impression that they were in full retreat. Sensing an easy victory, the TIE fighters closed in after them, following the B-wings all the way up to the edge of atmosphere beneath the shield.

Which was exactly what she wanted.

"My name is Lieutenant Gina Moonsong."

She gazed at the new faces. Above them, up in the hangar's observation deck, she caught a glimpse of Stramm watching over the railing. Each of her cadets was untested. And she wouldn't have time to teach them much.

"The three of you have been assigned to my section." She glanced down at the datapad containing the personnel files. "So welcome to Blade Squadron." She paused. What else was she supposed to say?

"Well, don't be shy," she said. "Sound off."

The tallest of them spoke up first. "Pilot Cadet Yori Dahn reporting."

Moonsong gazed at her appraisingly. "It says here you used to be first officer on a tramp freighter."

"Yes, Lieutenant."

"And what led you to join up?"

"The Imperials executed my crew."



"So you're here for revenge," said Moonsong.

"I suppose so, Lieutenant."

"That's a terrible reason to fight."

"Is it? I thought that—"

"It's likely to get you killed. Find a better reason."

"Yes, Lieutenant."

Moonsong had already turned to the next cadet. "And who are you supposed to be?"

"Pilot Cadet Jordan Karls." He was a stout Togruta who wore a pelt-sash made from what Moonsong suspected was a particularly nasty predator. Karls looked like he had killed it himself with his bare hands.

"Your file says you saw action near Bespin. What makes you think you'll be a good B-wing pilot?"

"I'm highly adaptable, Lieutenant."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"I've flown everything but X-wings."

"B-wings are a lot more temperamental than X-wings," said Moonsong. "Your file says you did okay in training. We'll see how that works in practice." She turned to the last cadet, but he spoke first:



Moonsong motioned to Fanty, who stepped up and carried on.

"Okay you heard the El-Tee; let's go."

Moonsong looked back up at the observation deck, but Stramm was no longer there.

As the atmosphere frayed, so did the Ground-hogs' advantage. Moonsong fired her afterthrusters; the B-wings broke formation, spun around and rocketed headfirst back towards their pursuers, causing them to scatter in surprise. Moonsong and Fanty dropped in behind a pair of TIE fighters, and unceremoniously shot them out of the sky. Suddenly B-wing pilots who had never engaged a foe before found themselves winning their very first fight. Poole and Dahn whooped as they engaged a disoriented TIE, making short work out of him. Poole's excited voice crackled over Moonsong's speakers.

"Just like shooting mouse droids in a barrel!"

"Blades Five and Six, look out!!" Even as she snarled the warning, Moonsong knew it was too late—a TIE fighter was already dropping into Poole's blindspot, peppering him with laser fire. The B-wing's cockpit belched a plume of smoke before turning away and plummeting down through the clouds. Moonsong veered sharply leftward, riddling the TIE fighter that had brought down Poole, sending it spinning down after him. But the payback brought no solace.

"Come in," said Stramm.

She stepped inside his wardroom, but didn't close the door behind her.

"Here's the operation," he said without preamble. This routine was new to both of them, and they were making it up as they went along. He keyed up a map of a star sector and pointed at an insignificant cluster at the edge of it. "Commander Antilles scouted out the target: an Imperial communications hub on Malastare. I'm working up the program."

She studied the map. "Looks like the planet's shielded."

"Thankfully the shield generator is right next to the primary target. We can hit both at the same time."

"How do we get in?"

"Well," Stramm looked uncomfortable. "Ackbar's techies think if we aggregate our ion cannons, we can create a temporary aperture."

"That sounds crazy."

"Do I look like I'm arguing?"

"And even if we..." She caught sight of a locale planetside, tapped it. "What's this?"

MOONSONG KNEW IT WAS TOO LATE—THE TIE FIGHTER WAS ALREADY DROPPING INTO POOLE'S BLINDSPOT, PEPPERING HIM WITH LASERFIRE.

"Pilot Cadet Cutter Poole, ma'am."

Poole was young, square jawed handsome, dark-haired and blue-eyed. He looked like an action hero right out of the latest holoplay.

"What are you smiling at?" she asked him.

"I'm just glad the war didn't end before I got here, sir. I mean, ma'am."

"Oh I see. A glory boy. We've got all kinds of uses for you. Just so you all know: I don't like being addressed as ma'am, skipper, sir, or boss. You all get to call me lieutenant. If any of you joined up thinking you'll take a quick rumble through the war and be home before the next Founder's Day, I have some sad news for you. This thing isn't over by a long shot. I hope you're reading me."

"Yes, Lieutenant," they replied in unison.

"Welcome to Blade Squadron then. Now... this is my wingman, Fanty. He's going to get you all squared away. We start training exercises tomorrow at oh-six-hundred sharp."



"That's Moff Pandion's vacation palace."
 "Pandion... Didn't he used be the head of some slaver cartel?"
 "Still is. He supplies a lot of the Empire's work camps."
 "And we're not planning on hitting him?"

Moonsong struggled to keep her voice level.

"Let's stay focused, Lieutenant. If we hit the station and knock out the defenses we'll be able to get boots on the ground and secure the planet." He gave Moonsong a hard look. "That's what counts. We need to be disciplined and make sure we bring everyone back in one piece. Right?"

She shook her head. "Playing it safe isn't going to win us the war, sir. If Moff Pandion is there, we need to consider hitting the target."

"Well, that's part of the problem. We don't know if he is there or not, and I don't want to risk anybody's life going after him."

"We've risked our lives for a whole lot less."

"Gina—"

"And who do you think is doing the actual communicating? Hitting the hub might hurt Pandion—but killing him in his palace will put an end to any orders he might want to send out. Not to mention making it that much more likely that his troops will take our orders to surrender."

"Lieutenant, you have your orders. Are we clear?"

She hesitated for the tiniest of moments. For anyone who wasn't a fighter pilot, it wouldn't have even been discernible. For someone who was, it was unmistakable.

"Yessir," she said.

The communication array and the shield generator disappeared in a massive explosion that kicked thousands of kilograms of orange-gray dust up into the air. Stramm's bombs had found their marks. The ground forces would have a much easier task now.

"Blade Leader to Blade Squadron; we have knocked out the targets and are heading to the rendezvous point." Moonsong watched on the screen as Stramm vectored skyward as she dispatched the last TIE fighter. She keyed the mic:

"Fanty. Get Yori to the rendezvous."

"I'm not leaving you, Lieutenant. What are we doing?"

Moonsong hesitated. *What the hell*, she thought. "Drop to one-zero-zero meters and target that power signature at oh-seven-five northwest."

"That's the Moff's palace."

"Exactly. We're going to hit it."

"We just got the order to bug out, Lieutenant. Besides, we—"

"Won't have enough fuel to make orbit? I just did the calculations. We can make it, but it's going to be close."

"Let's do it," said Yori, speaking up for the first time. "I'm having a blast."

Fanty laughed mirthlessly. "This is not a good idea."

"You don't have to come with me," replied Moonsong.

"That's where I disagree."

The three ships plunged in toward the ground, the few remaining TIE fighters left far in their wake. Most of the ground fire was still focused on the fleeing Stramm; it took the turbolasers a while to pick up on Moonsong, but when they did they started to make up for lost time with a vengeance.

Moonsong watched as orange-gray spread out on all sides and streaks of fire rose toward her.

"Picking up some pretty hairy flak, boss," said Fanty.

"We'll go down to the deck and use proton torpedoes. When we get inside the perimeter, pull up and run like hell."

"Blade Three, what are you doing?" Stramm's voice echoed in her headset. "Get back in formation!!"

"Can't read you," said Moonsong. "Picking up a lot of static—"

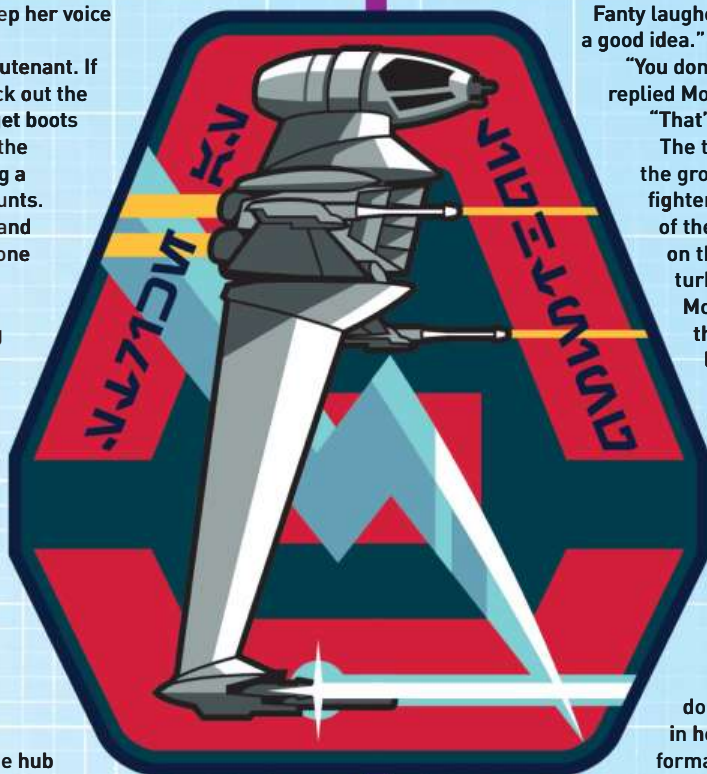
"Dammit you can hear me just fine! I told you to stay on—" His voice cut out as Moonsong cut the communication channel. Stramm would have to wait until they rejoined the squadron to yell at her. The three B-wings swooped down until they were less than fifty or so meters above the ground.

Moonsong's battle computer sounded

a variety of alarms as they drifted into a sea of anti-aircraft fire. All she could do was hope against hope that the B-wing's powerful ECM bubble and high speed approach would prove too much for the Imperial targeting computers on the ground to handle.

"Stay in formation," she said. "We're only going to get one pass." The B-wings roared into the grass-covered valley that contained the sprawling estate. The barrage of torpedoes turned the various buildings into pillars of flame, which then collapsed in on themselves. In moments, the whole valley was a roaring inferno. Moonsong didn't know if the Moff was there or not, but she knew that if nothing else, he wouldn't be hosting any more lavish dinner parties. It might not have been much, but for now it was enough. She pulled back on the stick and led what was left of her squadron up, racing into thick clouds. The ship shook so hard it felt like it was about to come apart. The clouds got thicker and thicker. Her instruments went dark. She kept on accelerating upward. If she made it back, she could only imagine what kind of reception she was going to get from Stramm.

Truth was, she couldn't wait. 🗑️



THE THREE SHIPS LUNGED
 TOWARD THE GROUND, THE FEW
 REMAINING TIE FIGHTERS LEFT FAR
 IN THEIR WAKE.





AHSOKA TANO

A HERO FOR OUR TIME

IN HER ONGOING SERIES ON THE HERO'S JOURNEY IN
STAR WARS, TRICIA BARR EXAMINES HOW AHSOKA
TANO'S ARC IN *STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS*
REVEALS THE EVOLUTION OF MYTHOLOGICAL HEROES.

Clockwise, from left: Anakin offers some words of wisdom to his young Padawan; Captain Tarkin puts Ahsoka on trial; a romantic liaison with kindred spirit Lux Bonteri; an inspirational leader to her Padawan younglings.

In the *Star Wars* films, the principal protagonists progress through character arcs that define them as heroes. Luke Skywalker and his father, Anakin, follow mirrored versions of the Hero's Journey, one triumphant and one tragic. Princess Leia, Padmé, Obi-Wan Kenobi, and Han Solo also grow and change across the saga. When Ahsoka Tano's journey began in *The Clone Wars*, however, it wasn't clear that her personal story would map out to a heroic arc. After Padmé's demise in *Revenge of the Sith*, fans wondered whether Anakin Skywalker's new Padawan was doomed to a similar tragic fate. She might grow into a memorable heroine in her own right, or she could serve as a temporary, forgettable sidekick whose death could accelerate his ultimate fall to the dark side. For advocates of strong female characters and more diversity in storytelling, watching and critiquing *The Clone Wars* became an exercise in hope for the future of *Star Wars*. The next generation of fans would be introduced to the franchise by way of the animated television series and,

just like the storytellers of our time, they would be influenced by nostalgia for their earliest adventures in the galaxy far, far away. Fortunately, Ahsoka Tano and *The Clone Wars* delivered on her potential.

THE POWER OF MYTH

If you asked a thousand fans what *Star Wars* means to them, likely you would hear a thousand different answers, and from their aggregate you might see the mosaic of what makes the franchise special to so many people. When writer and mythologist Joseph Campbell undertook the process of analyzing the Hero's Journey, he similarly combed through hundreds of stories and parsed out the common strands among the mythic tales, seeking to uncover the storytelling architecture which gives them their weight.

But why do heroic journeys seem to resonate more with an audience? And more importantly, what is behind their staying power? After the prequel trilogy filled in the missing pieces of Anakin Skywalker's rise and fall, *Star Wars* confronted both of those questions within the context of its new animated television show.

One common thread in myths is that their stories provide a roadmap to how society is supposed





ethically ambiguous themes and characters, others in fandom often commented that the stories didn't "feel like *Star Wars*."

Into this uncertain era, Ahsoka Tano was introduced. She was the apprentice to a supernaturally powered Chosen One, who the audience knew was destined to fail, perhaps in some part because his entire Order had lost sight of their true purpose. Her mere existence seemed to run counter to the entrenched culture of continuity consistency that previously had predominated across the franchise.

THE PADAWAN'S PATH

Admittedly, I harbored mixed feelings about Ahsoka at first. Like many fans, I struggled with the fact that her existence did not factor into *Revenge of the Sith*, not even as a memory or off-hand mention in dialogue. The prequel trilogy drove home the point that those in closest orbit to Anakin Skywalker were doomed like space debris inside the event horizon of a black hole. I was very reluctant to become invested in her character for fear that she would be killed off just at the point I became fond of her. At the time *The Clone Wars* premiered, many fans felt the positive portrayals of female characters in the franchise had tapered off after high points with Queen Amidala



of the Republic, though, the mythic divide of good and evil was blurred with a muddled, compromised morality. The subsequently published books and comics then took that theme to its extremes. While some fans enjoyed the edgier,

AHSOKA TANO AND *THE CLONE WARS* DELIVERED ON HER POTENTIAL.



IT IS SIMPLY IMPOSSIBLE TO SEPARATE ASHLEY ECKSTEIN FROM THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHARACTER.

Counter-clockwise, from below: Ahsoka channels the Force; a parting of the ways as Ahsoka walks away from Anakin and the Jedi Order; in shock as Ahsoka feels a grave disturbance in the Force; making the journey from *The Clone Wars* to *Rebels*; a force to be reckoned with, as she holds her own in combat against General Grievous.

in *The Phantom Menace*, Mara Jade in the Hand of Thrawn duology, and Jaina Solo through *The New Jedi Order: Destiny's Way*. Still, *Star Wars* had always been about hope to me. Having often spoken up to ask for more and better female characters, I watched skeptically out of the corner of my critical eye. In its initial seasons, *The Clone Wars'* meandering chronology and anthology format made it difficult to discern the show's vision. It was most definitely defying some of the expectations of the existing fanbase, first by disregarding publishing continuity and second by bringing a female Jedi front and center. But Ashley Eckstein (the voice of Ahsoka) waded into the fandom with a positive attitude, while supervising director Dave Filoni handled press conferences and convention panels with poise worthy of a Jedi Master—even as fankids began standing up to ask if Ahsoka Tano was going to die.

The year 2009 proved exciting for female fans. The second season of *The Clone Wars* began to take a less disjointed approach to its storytelling and an arc began to emerge for Ahsoka Tano. Even better, it wasn't just Ahsoka's journey as a lone female in a sea of male characters; she developed friendships with Senator Amidala and fellow Padawan Barriss Offee, as well as an adversary in bounty hunter Aurra Sing.

At the same time Eckstein, correctly perceiving a dramatic lack in geek-themed apparel targeted at the female fan, launched Her Universe. In my article on Han Solo earlier this year, I expressed my caution in considering an actor when critiquing a character's heroic journey; it was Eckstein's role in shaping Ahsoka's story that began to change my opinion on that matter. It is simply impossible to separate the actress from the importance of the character. Over the entire run of *The Clone Wars*, Ahsoka's champions, Dave Filoni and Ashley Eckstein, took a novel approach to their relationship with fandom. After the prequel era, Filoni and Eckstein embraced *The Clone Wars'* fandom, with Filoni remaining the Plo-Kool cat showrunner and Eckstein wooing fans one at a time through upbeat interviews and numerous personal appearances, not just at big events but also at smaller conventions. From the charismatic original trilogy cast to the *Star Wars Rebels* voice cast, it has become apparent that *Star Wars* characters shine their brightest when the actor or actress already embodies the qualities of that character. For an era such as the Clone Wars, steeped in pessimism and defeat, there needed to be a helpful portion of hope to come out the other side.

Considering Ahsoka's future beyond Order 66 was not always

guaranteed, it certainly suggests that the power of hopeful fans can play a role in heroic journeys, much in the way it has for other notable female characters of the past few years.

I have always been in the "Ahsoka lives" camp, though, if need be, Ahsoka would die. I don't have a problem with that if the story demands it. I've always thought Ahsoka's existence is tied to two things: A) if we can come up with a story that's good enough that George says, "Okay, she can keep going," and B) if fans like the character enough that we can all say, "Okay, she can keep going." Those are two pretty important things.—

Dave Filoni interview with StarWars.com (2013)

A HEROINE'S PATH

As modern society has changed, so too has the role of myth and our perceptions and expectations for the values and themes modern myths should convey. At FANgirl Blog, editor B.J. Priestler and I have been analyzing the Campbellian model and evaluating how it has evolved, particularly in light of



many prominent and successful contemporary stories with female protagonists from Wonder Woman and Buffy the Vampire Slayer to Katniss Everdeen and Kamala Khan. Campbell created his model based on centuries of mythical lore, stories that had been commissioned by kings and written by men. When a student or a storyteller today poses the question of how a female character would be included in the Hero's Journey model, there isn't centuries' worth of books or decades of comics and film to help guide the way. Some disagree on whether Campbell's model is even applicable for a heroine in myth. Ahsoka Tano's story borrows some key elements of the Campbellian model, such as a physical and emotional metamorphosis through her trials and tribulations, a spiritual death and rebirth on Mortis, and repeated conflict with several metaphorically paternal authority figures. In other aspects, though, her journey forges new directions, particularly in her drive to make a difference in the real world rather than striving for spiritual glorification.

Ahsoka Tano is far from ordinary, but over the course of her journey through *The Clone Wars* she rose above what appeared to be her preordained fate. Like heroic

journeys of old, *The Clone Wars* created a story that, through the lens of its heroine, attempted to show its primary audience how it should behave, to listen to elders and mind those with more experience. But Ahsoka's heroine's journey also revealed a powerful lesson that is nearly impossible to impart to a child—which is that at some point they have to decide for themselves what is right and wrong.

"Eventually you have to face the fact that good and evil aren't that clear-cut and the real issue is trying to understand the difference."

—George Lucas (1983) 🍷

MORE TO SAY

Tricia Barr is co-author of *Ultimate Star Wars* from DK Publishing. Follow her @fangirlcantina.

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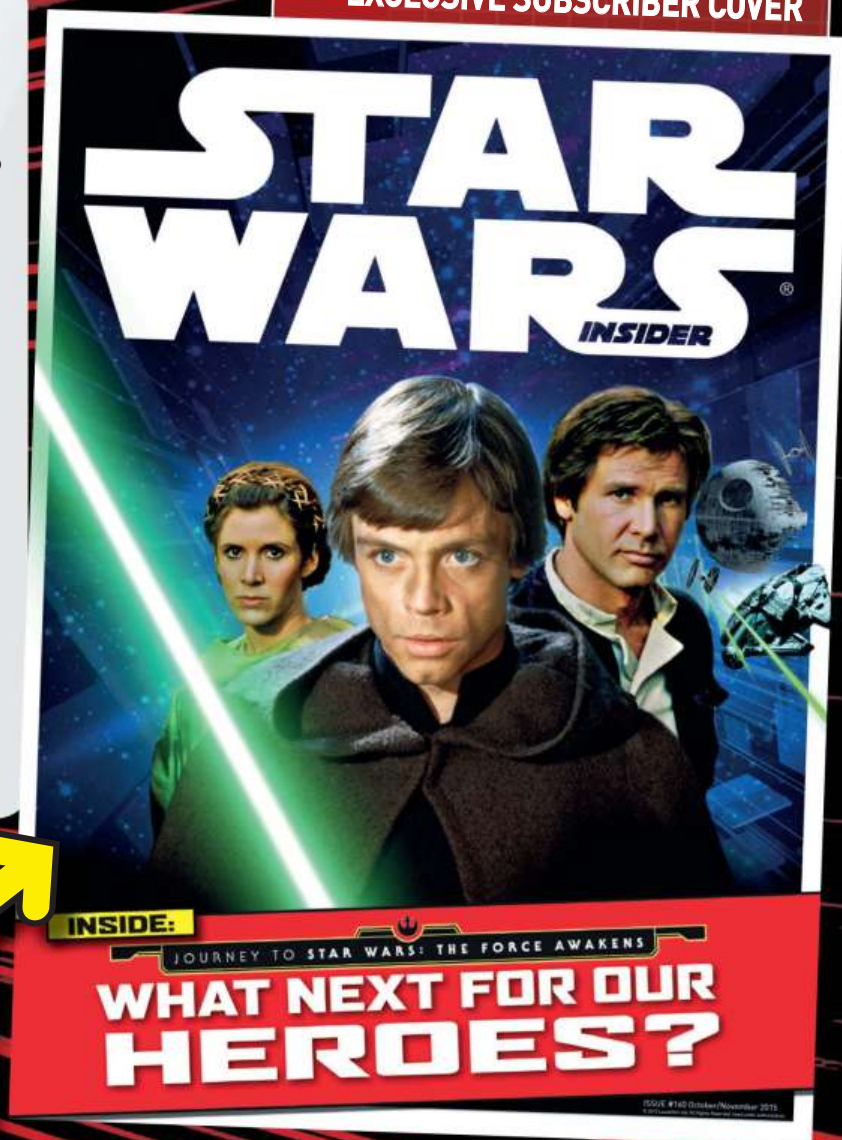
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THE RETURN OF THE JEDI ARCHIVES OF JAMES KAHN

PART I

BY MICHAEL KOGGE

Right: The first page of the manuscript, typed from Kahn's handwritten notebooks. "Don't know if it's appreciable here, but it's actually three page segments cut out and glued onto another page—the original cut and paste," Kahn says. "If you made changes, you had to retype them on another sheet of paper, then cut out sections of text and glue them down."

Right, Opposite page: James Kahn with his source materials and the notebooks he used to draft the novel.

Fans of the original trilogy novelizations had a special surprise awaiting them at Celebration 2015 in Anaheim. Attending a *Star Wars* convention for the first time, *Return of the Jedi* author James Kahn joined a panel of other novelization writers and divulged the contents of a little archive he'd collected during the days writing *Jedi*. He showed the audience production photos of cinematic creatures and characters with which Lucasfilm had supplied him for visual reference, presented pages from the third draft of the *Jedi* screenplay that included his own annotations, and even told of "lost chapters" he'd written that didn't make the published version.

In this exclusive two-part interview, Kahn opens his archive for *Star Wars Insider* readers and talks about his experience writing in the galaxy of far, far away. (For more on James Kahn, check out his profile in *Insider* 143.)

What inspired you to become a writer?

I fell in love with adventure stories when I was four years old, and listened over and over to an old 78 rpm record of *Treasure Island*, narrated by Basil Rathbone. At the age of nine I read tons of comic books—*Superman*, *Flash*, *Green Lantern*, but also *Amazing Stories*, *Tales from the Crypt*, books of that ilk. And I remember thinking sometimes they should have different endings, or twists in the middle, so I'd rewrite them in my spiral notebooks, with my own plot changes. That was probably my

training ground for novelizing. I spent most of my high school years reading science fiction—Arthur C. Clarke, Bradbury, Heinlein, Poul Anderson, Asimov, Sturgeon—and developed a deep love for it that I always associate with the smell of old libraries. Aside from that, my tastes in fiction are rather eclectic. My favorites would include *To Kill*

a Mockingbird, *Lonesome Dove*, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and *Smiley's People*, *The Rose of Tibet*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Third Man*, *Childhood's End*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Neuromancer*, *The Sotweed Factor*, and *Huckleberry Finn*.

It seems quite fitting that before you became a master of Jedi, you were (and still are) a medical doctor.

My love of science fiction is partly rooted in my love of science, which is what led to medicine as a career direction. A number of different medical specialties interested me over the years—internal medicine,

PROLOGUE

The very depth of space. There was the length, and width, and height; and then these dimensions curved over on themselves into a bending blackness measurable only by the glinting stars that tumbled through the chasm, receding to infinity. To the very depth.

These stars marked the moments of the universe. There were aging orange embers, blue dwarfs, twin yellow giants. There were collapsing neutron stars, and angry supernovae that hissed into the icy emptiness. There were burning stars, breathing stars, pulsing stars and dying stars. There was the Death Star.

At the feathered edge of the galaxy the Death Star floated in stationary orbit above the green moon Endor—a moon whose mother planet had long since died of unknown cataclysm, and disappeared into unknown realms. The Death Star was the Empire's armored Battle Station, nearly twice as big as its predecessor, which rebel forces had destroyed so many years before—nearly twice as big, but more than twice as powerful. Yet it was only half completed.

Half a steely dark orb, it hung above the green world of Endor, tentacles of unfinished superstructure curling away toward its living mate like the groping legs of a deadly spider.

An Imperial Star Destroyer approached the giant Space Station at cruising speed. It was massive—a city itself—yet moved with deliberate grace, like some great sea dragon. It was accompanied by dozens of Twin-Ion-Engine Fighters—black insect-like combat-flyers that zipped back and forth

"I FELL IN LOVE WITH
ADVENTURE STORIES WHEN
I WAS FOUR YEARS OLD."



psychiatry, hand surgery, neuroendocrine immunology—but eventually I was drawn to Emergency Medicine because it seemed like contemporary sorcery to me. You could be standing over a dead body and pull it back to life. Sort of commando wizardry, which appealed to me as a young man. And it was everything it promised to be, but it's a young man's game. I still practice medicine at an Urgent Care Center part time, but I'm no longer up to the task of saving multiple car wreck victims.

How did you get the job to adapt *Return of the Jedi*?

I was working an ER in Santa Monica when Kathleen Kennedy called to ask if anyone there could help her resuscitate an alien. A number of us went down to the set of *E.T.*, where we donned hazmat suits and pounded on E.T.'s chest and ad-libbed all the medical jargon you hear. (I'm onscreen for about a nanosecond, first carrying a clipboard, and then standing at E.T.'s bedside.) While there I presented director Steven Spielberg with a copy of my recently released sci-fi novel, *World Enough and Time*, and asked him to turn it into a movie (such chutzpah!). He politely declined, but passed the book on to Frank Marshall, his other producer, who read enough of it to offer me the novelization of *Poltergeist*, which was by then in post-production—the catch being I had to agree to write it in under 30 days.

I got friends to cover all my ER shifts, sat in Spielberg's office at MGM for a month, and turned out two drafts

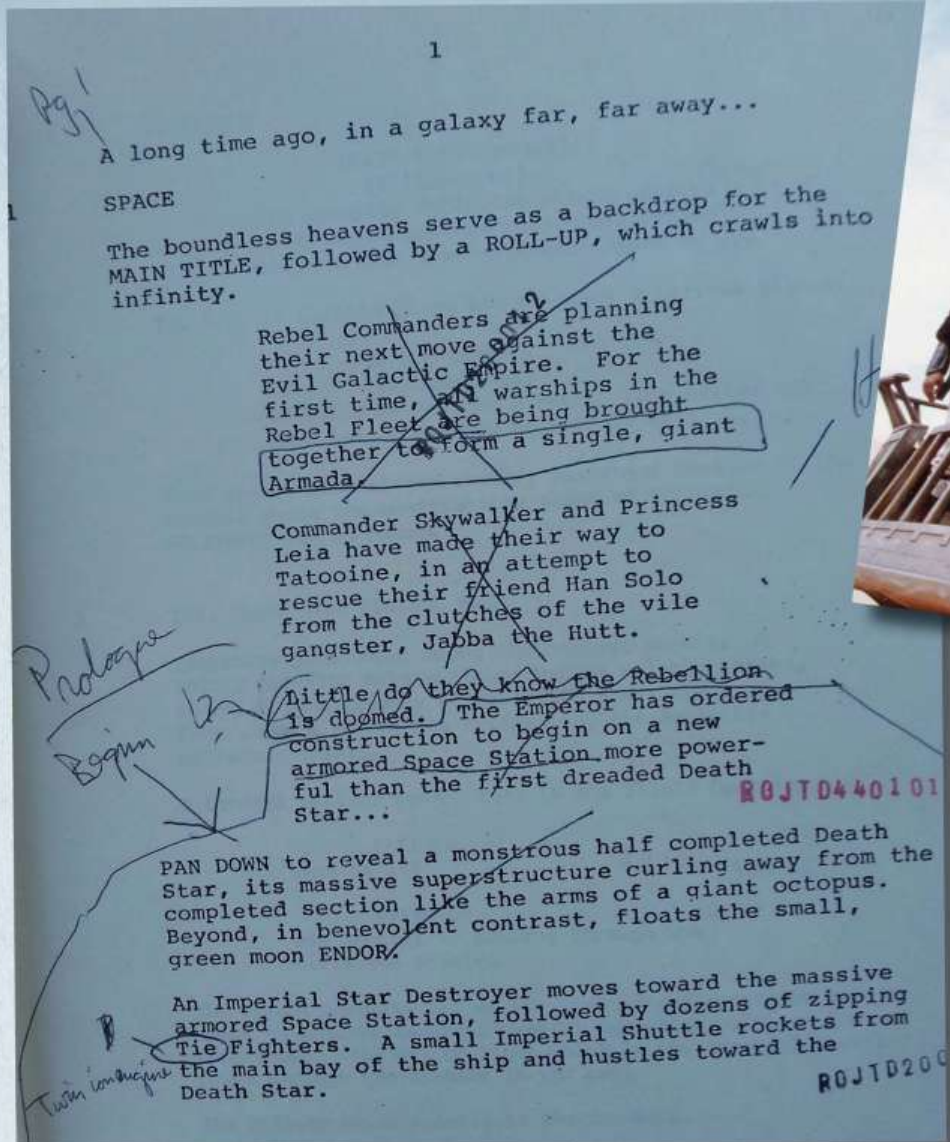
"I WROTE A CHAPTER ABOUT LEIA'S GROWING UP ON ALDERAAN AND HOW SHE GOT INVOLVED IN THE REBELLION..."

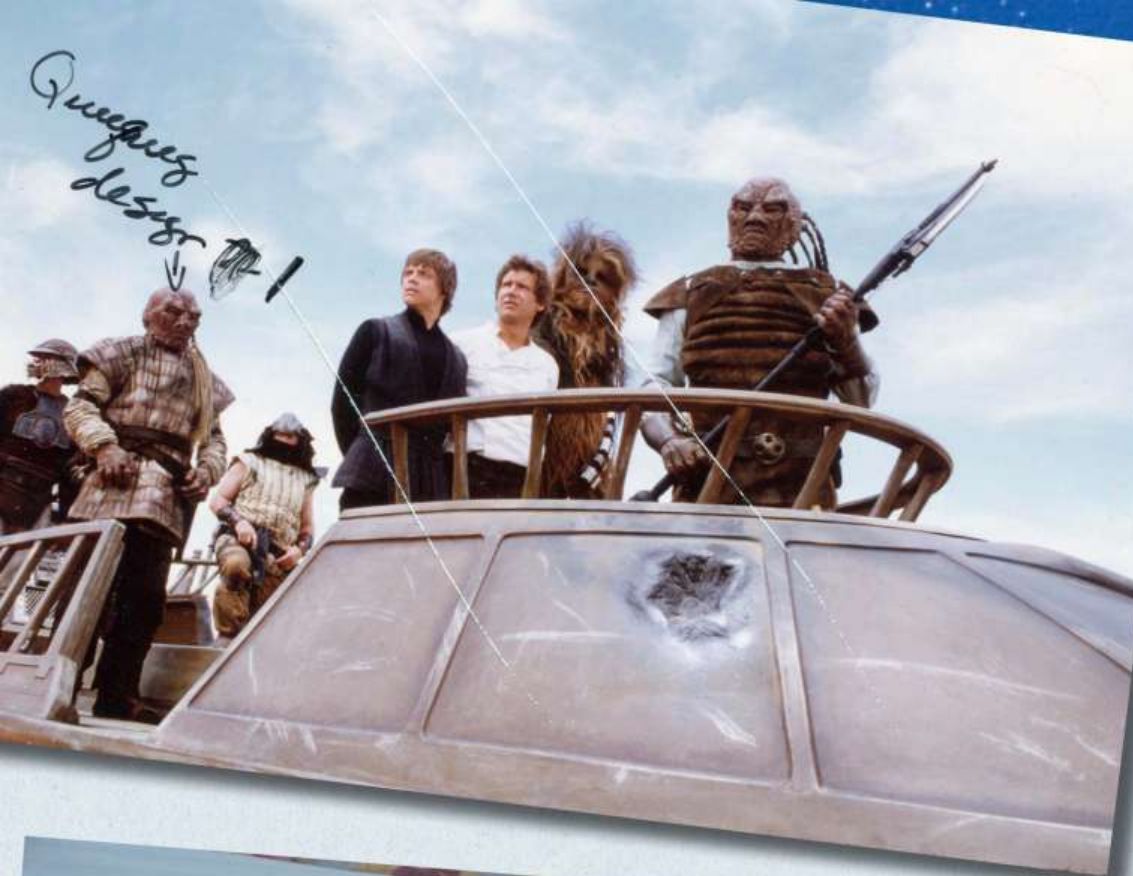
in 28 days. Steven and his posse were well pleased with it, so the following year, when George Lucas was looking for someone to novelize *Return of the Jedi*, I got big props from Spielberg and company. In addition, my own sci-fi novel was published by Del Rey, and the chief editor, Judy-Lynn Del Rey, was also publishing the *Star Wars* trilogy, so she recommended me to George as well.

What was your knowledge of *Star Wars* at the time?

I was merely a huge fan of *Star Wars* at the time. Ever since that first Star Destroyer roared over my head into frame, chasing Leia's rebel ship, I was hooked.

Return of the Jedi was the most highly anticipated film of 1983. What





Opposite page from top: The first page of the *Revenge of the Jedi* script Lucasfilm provided to the author.

Annotations are Kahn's, which show his decision concerning where and how to start the novel; a production photo of the rancor keeper. "I always felt bad for this guy. I mean, he was the hero in his own life, and he had feelings too, right?"

Left: A production photo of Jabba's mercenaries bringing Luke, Han, and Chewie to their doom. "I like that the designer was calling this guy's costume 'Queequeg,'" says Kahn; a production photo of Emperor Palpatine disembarking from an Imperial shuttle. All the supplied photos "were scratched over to prevent black market sales," according to Kahn.



precautions were taken to guarantee its secrets were not spoiled before release?

So I just got a cold call one day. Then they sent the script to me early in 1982. My special instructions were basically, don't breathe a word of this to anyone, or everything you own or hold dear belongs to us! George Lucas had a couple tricks up his sleeve, though. In the script I received, Luke—not Vader—kills the Emperor. So that's what I wrote in the novel. When I saw the movie I was stunned to see Darth Vader kill Palpatine.

Later, up at Skywalker Ranch, I asked George if that was a last minute change. He said no, he'd known for years that Vader was going to kill the Emperor. When I asked if he used different endings in different scripts, so if one of them leaked nobody would know which ending was real, he just smiled and walked away. (Editor: Yes, they were scripts with fake pages—see *The Making of Return of the Jedi*; the revelation that Leia is Luke's sister was also omitted.)

What is your process of turning a film script into a novel?

I annotate the margins and versions of the script pages fairly heavily



with whatever thoughts are generated as I read and reread: ideas about random lines of dialogue, backstory, character motivation, etc. Then my first draft is mostly what I call a skeleton draft, which is just the plotline of the screenplay with not a lot of change from the script. Then my second draft goes back and layers in all the margin notes I made along the way, including where I think original dialogue needs to be dropped or changed or expanded.

Your annotations for *Return of the Jedi* list the different emotional buzzwords that were driving your writing at the time. Where was most of your focus?

I found I did it most for Luke, Leia, and Vader. They were the core of the emotional story for me. Solo is a wonderful archetype but I don't feel like I ever really got inside him.

Wanting to see more of Leia's character, I also wrote her a chapter of her own, about her backstory growing up on Alderaan, how she got involved in the rebellion, etc.

It got cut—which I understand completely, since it violated George's own backstory. Unfortunately, I lost the box containing it, along with letters and other memorabilia.

What was your timeline for producing the novel?

I was told to finish it within a month—I'm not sure why there was a rush—but I think I actually did it in 26 days (both rough and final draft). Of course I didn't have kids back then, or any other demands, and I wrote it from home. I just got up every morning, got my coffee and started writing, and didn't much stop all day and into the night. My wife, Jill, wasn't

thrilled about my absence *in situ*, but she was a good sport.

How did the production photographs Lucasfilm provided influence your writing?

They were a big help for the visual descriptions in the novel. They sent me a lot of them, both color and black and white, with big scratches through them so I couldn't re-sell them.

What did you discuss when you met George Lucas?

The first meeting took place in Marin County before I started writing. We talked about the characters a little

"AFTER THE FIRST DRAFT, I WAS ASKED TO ADD A MOMENT AT THE VERY END WHERE THE SPIRITS OF OBI-WAN AND YODA APPEAR AT THE EWOK BONFIRE."



Left, from top: The Star Wars Celebration Anaheim novelization panel (photo credit: Sterling Hershey). From left to right: Ryder Windham, Shelly Shapiro, Michael Kogge, James Kahn, Alan Dean Foster, and Jonathan Wilkins; an original *Revenge of the Jedi* poster given to Kahn; a draft page of *Jedi*'s climactic scene from Kahn's notebook, showing Luke's insights into Vader, particularly why he didn't kill Luke or Leia when he had the chance.

aware of those consequences. He wanted Luke to know this was no longer just a game. This was Darkness.

Luke heard something else, though. "You thought betray you, father. I feel the good in you... the conflict. You could not bring yourself to kill me before—and you won't destroy me now." Twice before, in fact—to Luke's recollection—Vader could have killed him, but didn't. In the dogfight over the first Death Star, and in the lightsaber fight on Bespin. He thought of Leia, briefly now, too—of how Vader had had her in his clutches once, had even tortured her... but ~~couldn't~~ didn't kill her. He winced to think of his sister's agony, but quickly pushed her from his mind. The point was clear to him, ~~and~~ now, though so often so murky, there was still good in his father.

This accusation really made Vader angry. He could tolerate much from the insolent child, but this was insupportable. He must teach this boy a lesson he would never forget, or ~~his~~ learning. "Once again you underestimate the power of the Dark side..."

Vader threw his lightsaber



He wasn't being mean or sarcastic, just a little defeated by his obligations I think.

Did Lucasfilm ever phone you with changes to the film?

Yes, everything written in the margins is my own invention. Lucasfilm never phoned me with changes that I can recall, with one exception. After the first draft they called to ask me to add a moment at the very end where the spirits of Obi-Wan and Yoda appear by the Ewok bonfire, like they're watching over Luke. I wrote them as very ephemeral, shadowy and brief, unlike the final film version.

Next Issue: Leia's diary, a letter to George, and... Obi-Wan's brother?

MORE TO SAY

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Michael Kogge @michaelkogge
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HAVE YOU?

and I asked some questions. He was very nice, but a little distracted. I got the sense he was overwhelmed by the behemoth he'd created. When I gave him a copy of my sci-fi novel, *World Enough and Time*—the first of my trilogy—and asked if he'd consider reading it and producing it, he looked at me with a weary smile and took me to an adjacent

room. There were scripts piled high on every desk, every shelf, even on the floor. He said, "That pile is scripts from all my friends from film school, over there are high school friends, that one is relatives, those are from my agent, those are from Marcia [Lucas's] friends... You can put your book over there, on that pile."

THE ART OF

ACADEMY AWARD-WINNING ART
DIRECTOR LESLIE DILLEY RECALLS HIS
TIME WORKING ON *A NEW HOPE*.
INTERVIEW BY CALUM WADDELL

Counter-clockwise,
from top: Luke's
landspeeder; Kenny
Baker inside R2-D2;
the droid as seen in
the movie; C-3PO's
"arteries" on display;
the art department
on *A New Hope*:
Roger Christian (set
decorator), Dilley, John
Barry (production
designer), Bill Welch
(construction manager),
and Norman Reynolds
(art director).

Born in Glamorgan, Wales, Leslie Dilley now resides many miles away from his hometown in the glitz and glamor of Los Angeles. He also continues to work in the film industry as a production designer and art director (his most recent credit is on the television series *Teacup Travels*)—which isn't bad for a man who is now 74 years old. Most impressively, though, Dilley has been involved in some of the most famous genre movies ever made—including, of course, 1977's *Star Wars*, on which he worked as an art director alongside the celebrated John Barry and Norman Reynolds. In 1980 Dilley also gained employment as an art director on *The Empire Strikes Back*, and the unassuming Welshman quickly became a go-to guy for anyone wanting to spruce up the look of their fantasy film. Indeed, with such impressive titles as *Superman* (1978), *Alien* (1979), *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *Legend* (1985), *The Abyss* (1989), and *Casper* (1995) under his belt, the quietly spoken artist has worked on some of the most lavish, and influential, Tinseltown genre epics of the past few decades. As the remarkably humble and good-natured gent admits, though, it all happened by accident...

"My family moved us to Wembley Park, near Wembley Stadium, in London, when I was still quite young," he begins. "I went to a facility called Wilson Technological College after high school. Back then you finished your education in your mid-teens and you either went to university or you took up a trade. I didn't know what I wanted to do, only that I needed a job, so I signed up for a course in architecture and that was going to be my future—basically, I was going to be a builder of some sort. Part of learning your trade was to also go and get hands-on experience. I got an apprenticeship doing some plastering work, but one of the guys from my class was off doing something else and he always seemed very happy with his lot in life [laughs]. So one day I said, 'Where exactly have they sent you to



WAR



Clockwise, from left: Echo base; a mock-up created to show the layout of the base; the *Millennium Falcon* under construction; another, more detailed mock-up, including small tauntauns and snowspeeders!

work? You seem to be over the moon whenever I see you!’ And he replied, ‘I’m at a film studio just down the road, called Pinewood.’ That sounded brilliant to me because I loved the movies! Then he said, ‘They are always open to applications, you should give it a go, too.’ I wrote a letter to Pinewood that night but, unfortunately, they had their full quota of apprentices and I was a little disheartened. Thankfully, I discovered that Pinewood wasn’t the only studio in London and after writing a few more letters I got hired by the Associate British Picture Corporation, which later became EMI, and served an apprenticeship with them. I did five years of plaster work for them. That was how I got into the industry. From there I got to know a little about art direction. I didn’t have a clue what that was—but it sounded interesting and that became my passion.”

So it was then that Dille



“EVERYONE WANTED TO BE A PART OF *STAR WARS*. JUST FROM HOW PEOPLE WERE SPEAKING ABOUT IT, WE COULD TELL THIS WAS A MAJOR PROJECT!”

began to find his feet, with his first credit as an art director being Richard Lester’s 1973 adventure romp *The Three Musketeers* [Editor’s note: an unsung classic!]. When it came to getting involved with *Star Wars*, though, it was all to do with who his friends were...

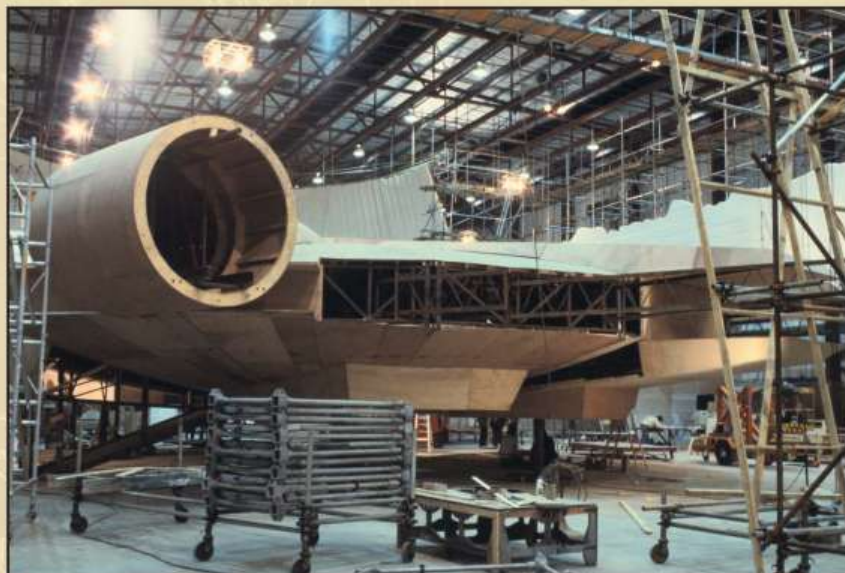
“You have doubtlessly heard the saying, ‘It’s not what you know, but who you know.’ That was the case with me and *Star Wars*. I did some work, uncredited, on a movie called *Lucky Lady*, which starred Gene Hackman and Liza Minnelli. I was working alongside Norman Reynolds, as his assistant, and Norman had been hired by production designer John Barry. Now John put together the design team for *Star Wars*. What happened is that the writers of *Lucky Lady* (Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz) were close friends with George Lucas, and they recommended that John should be his man in London. It all came from there and we were shooting *Lucky Lady* in Mexico, but hearing

all about this big new space adventure film that was going to be shooting in England very soon. So even though we were out in Mexico, enjoying the sunshine, we just wanted to get home so we could get onto *Star Wars*! Everyone wanted to be a part of it. Just from how people were speaking about it on the set, we could tell this was a major project.”

Dille became a central part of the *Star Wars* design crew, though he admits that when the script came into production’s hands, almost everyone was perplexed. After all, who could possibly put pictures to the words dreamed up by the vivid imagination of George Lucas?

“What can I say? We didn’t understand it at all,” laughs Dille. “One or two people even made a few negative comments and they were frowned upon, so they quickly shut up. The problem was that nobody, except George, if I am honest, really had the ability to imagine what it was going to be like. No one even knew what the





title meant! I remember at one of the first meetings someone joked, 'What is this supposed to mean? Does it refer to a bunch of actors in a fight?' But I am so glad that I was part of it. Norman Reynolds is one of the greatest art directors that ever lived and I found it really exciting to be working with him. I was one of a very small number of people who started on *Star Wars* right from the very beginning. I was working with Gary Kurtz and George Lucas—as well as John Barry and Norman and set dresser Roger Christian. I was there when everything was starting to take shape and I am so privileged to have that memory."

Despite the scope of *Star Wars*, Dilley admits that few people realized the resources that Lucas had been afforded. In fact, as the artist reveals, it was quite a close-knit community on the set—with everyone working together to achieve a successful end result.

"When *Star Wars* got going we spent a lot of time developing the look of the characters and also the inside of the spaceships and things like that," he reveals. "This was brand new ground to me—I had never worked on this kind of film so it was quite fresh and interesting. I remember the development of Artoo-Detoo, See-Threepio and the landspeeder

that Luke and Ben ride in. These all went through a number of designs. It was nothing like a big studio project now—with *Star Wars* we met in a little room and just worked as a tiny unit. Everyone had the freedom to chip in some ideas. It was brilliant. It all began with a lot of planning, a number of meetings and sketches, and then as it moved on, and the scale became apparent, the design team was moved into the Associate British Picture Corporation."

Dilley was even flown out to Tunisia with *Star Wars*, which also provided him with one of his fondest memories of the film...

"Everyone loves to travel and it was great to visit Tunisia," he says. "My job on *Star Wars* was to be on the set and to respond to anything relating to the design. That meant I got to be in the thick of it all. I was called upon to do all sorts of things, and on the spot as well. One of my favorite recollections is the sequence where See-Threepio has his arm knocked off and Luke and Ben have to come to his aid. I remember being asked to make that look as real as possible—so that the audience would react as if it was an actual human without a limb. So there I was, in the sweltering heat of the Tunisian desert, trying to make it look as if the wires coming out of See-Threepio's arm were like arteries. It actually turned out to be quite an effective scene and, of course, See-Threepio suffered a similar indignity in *The Empire Strikes Back*—so maybe George approved as well. But that was the interesting part of the *Star Wars* job—no two days were the same. How could they be? One day you are in a trash



compactor, on a set in London, and the next day you are in North Africa fixing droids.”

The fruit of Dille’s labor paid off, though, the minute he saw the final film. As with so many of the crew of *Star Wars*, who were a little unsure about how the movie might turn out, it became clear to the artist quite quickly that—yes!—this was going to be a very important motion picture.

“It was honestly like something from another planet when I finally saw the movie,” he laughs. “It took everyone by surprise—even the people who had at first joked about the script and had no idea how it would ever work. To be honest, who could have expected it would be so ground-breaking and so influential? No one ever imagined it would be what it became, except maybe George himself.”

Having served his time on *Star Wars*, Dille quickly found that he was being recommended for the art department on other blockbuster science-fiction projects.

“I owe a lot to *Star Wars*,” he smiles. “I was not part of a union back then, I was totally freelance—and because of that I depended on friends to put in a good word for me. I had worked before *Star Wars*, but now I had the most successful film of all time on my résumé and I was called upon to do a lot of similar movies. *Alien* and *Superman* came to me because of my work on *Star Wars* and then, of course, there was *The Empire Strikes Back*. I worked for Tobe Hooper on *Invaders from Mars*, which was a big picture, and that took me out to America for good—mainly because I met my wife through that job. So *Star Wars* changed my life in so many ways!”

Having been integral to the look of *Star Wars*, and thrown in at the



“IT WAS HONESTLY LIKE SOMETHING FROM ANOTHER PLANET WHEN I FINALLY SAW THE MOVIE.”

deep end, the legendary Lucas undertaking also turned Dille into something of a fan of the genre...

“I was keen on science fiction films before *Star Wars*, but after that I would go out of my way to watch them in the cinema—and I still do,” he says. “It is interesting because now I can say, ‘Ah, they took that from *Star Wars*.’ I don’t think there is a sci-fi picture made today that doesn’t owe its lineage to that film. And now they are making the new ones, which is very exciting. Sometimes people

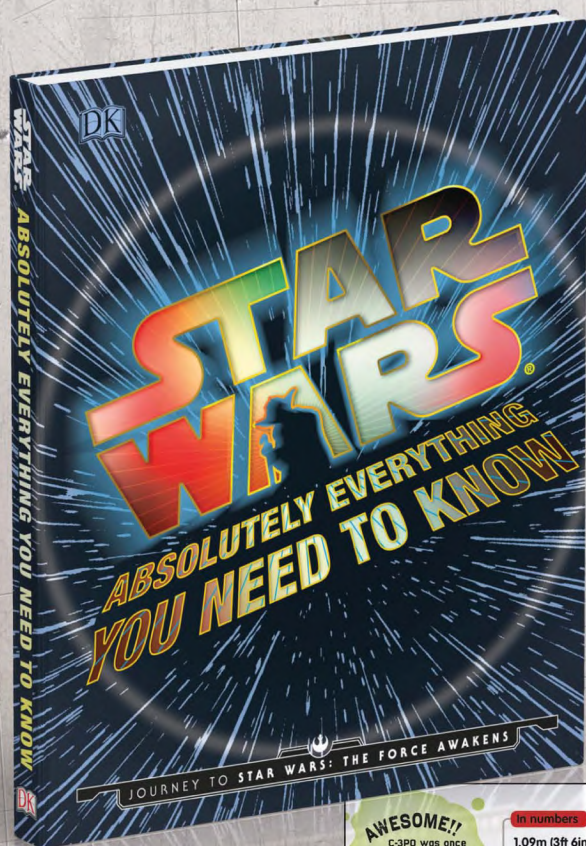
would ask me for something totally different—mainly because *Star Wars* had been such a huge hit. I remember on *Invaders from Mars* I was doing production design on some spaceships and they asked me if I could make it look a little less like *Star Wars*. I can’t say I blame them, because after that movie everything in the genre seemed to pay homage to the film. But that is just a testament to its success and to the vision of George Lucas.” 🍌

Clockwise, from top left: Mark Hamill poses on the impressive Dagobah swamp set; a behind-the-scenes shot of the set; the set hosted *The Empire Strikes Back* wrap party!



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STAR WARS



STAR WARS®: ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

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Who cleans the floors of the Death Stars?
What creature takes 1,000 years to digest
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questions and more in *Star Wars:
Absolutely Everything You Need to Know*,
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AWESOME!!
C-3PO was once
**MISTAKEN FOR A
GOD** by the primitive
Ewoks on the
moon of Endor!

In numbers ●●●●●

- 1.09m (3ft 6in)
R2-D2's height
- 75kg (165lbs)
C-3PO's former clod weight
- 21+
Astromech arms, scanners,
and accessories
- 15
Downing panels on R2-D2's head
- 10
C-3PO's known masters

DOUBLE TROUBLE!

Protocol droid C-3PO and his astromech ally R2-D2 are an unlikely pair. Although Threepio dislikes excitement, he often follows Artoo on thrilling exploits across the galaxy.

Q: What is R2's secret mission to Tatooine?
A: Princess Leia gives Artoo the stolen plans to the Empire's Death Star battle station. He must deliver them while in Gal-Wan Kenobi to save the galaxy.

Q: What is R2-D2 saying?
"SPRRPFT!"
"WRK-WRK. WEEEEEOP!"
"WAH-WAH. WRRY-WRRY-NAHWIKOO!"
"PRRP-PAREE-PAIRREEOP?"

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WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR DROID
Threepio can always be patched up with spare parts or upgraded to be better than new. Just make sure you keep a screwdriver, a large can of oil, and spray paint handy—not to mention a backload of compliments.

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Fast Facts

MANUFACTURER
R2-D2: Industrial Automaton
C-3PO: Cybot Galactica

MAKE
R2-D2: R-series
Astromech Droid
C-3PO: Protocol Droid

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS
R2-D2: Navigation, repair
C-3PO: Etiquette, protocol, translation

DROID-IN-CHARGE
R2-D2 (although C-3PO thinks it is him!)

BEST KNOWN FOR
SAVING QUEEN AMIDALA'S ROYAL STARSHIP
R2-D2

Q: Why is R2-D2 so hard to understand?
A: Artoo talks in binary, a language of beeps and whistles. C-3PO often has to translate to help everyone else work out what he's saying.

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A: Artoo talks in binary, a language of beeps and whistles. C-3PO often has to translate to help everyone else work out what he's saying.

Peek behind the scenes
Actor Anthony Daniels created Artoo while wearing the C-3PO costume, and had to learn against a wall of mirrors to see his own reflection.

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PRACTICAL MAGIC

THE SURPRISING EFFECTS OF THE PREQUELS



THERE'S A COMMON MISCONCEPTION THAT THE VISUAL EFFECTS FOR THE PREQUEL TRILOGY WERE EXCLUSIVELY DIGITAL. WHILE IT'S TRUE THAT VIRTUALLY EVERY FRAME OF THOSE FILMS PASSED THROUGH A COMPUTER, THE MYTH PERSISTS AND ROBS THE BRILLIANT ARTISANS WHO WORKED ON THE PREQUELS OF THEIR DUE. BRYAN YOUNG TALKS TO THREE OF THE MODEL MAKERS AND ARTISTS BEHIND THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF THE PREQUEL TRILOGY TO DISCOVER JUST HOW OFTEN THEY BLEW OUR MINDS WITH THEIR STUNNING VISUALS.

Steve Gawley worked as a model builder on the original *Star Wars* trilogy, and his resumé beyond that reads as a who's who of all your favorite films: *Jurassic Park*, *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, *Back to the Future*, and the *Indiana Jones* trilogy to name just some. When the prequels went into production Gawley was a supervisor in the Industrial Light & Magic model shop. Speaking about the difference in practical effects between the trilogies, he says, "A *New Hope* had 350 effect shots, *The*

Phantom Menace has 2,000, so that's many times larger. On Episode I, we had five crews shooting miniatures at one time and we had 95 model makers."

Don Bies is a name you might recognize as one of those model makers. He worked in the model shop for the prequels, but he was also the man in charge of R2-D2 on those films and was tasked with handling the Lucasfilm archives from 1988 to 1996. The mockumentary *R2-D2: Beneath the Dome* was his brainchild. He was on set for most of the prequels, operating R2 and performing other tasks.

"I was told that we made more models in the third film alone than the entire original trilogy combined. They were mainly building spaceships, and they could use the same spaceships over and over again. They only had to build four versions of the *Millennium Falcon*. The Death Star was a very simple model. For the prequels, we were building entire environments. We were building all of Theed City, the Mos Espa arena, Tipoca City, and a lot of the Geonosis landscape and environments there. The podrace alone had a number of models that were built; there was the





big podrace starting line, there was the announcer booth, and there was Jabba's viewing room. Because the scale of these things was so vast, the amount of people was more."

The digital effects team spent much more time marrying physical models and actors on physical sets together than creating environments out of the digital ether. Bies explains that, "the only set that was completely digital, with a model environment and actors shot against blue screen, was Tipoca City. And even some of that, such as Jango Fett's apartment, was a real set. We had other elements, such as the landing platform with Obi-Wan's ship—that was a full-sized practical set.

"When we were doing Episode III, we shot for days on the bridge of General Grievous's *Invisible Hand*," he says. "That was a great set to be on. There was bluescreen outside of it—but there was bluescreen on *The Empire Strikes Back* with a lot of those ship sets as well. For the prequels, there was a lot of practical stuff.

There was a lot of creature stuff that they did, too. They had whole creature departments for all three of the films. We had practical on all the films."

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Over the course of their time building models, the team discovered that the best effects came about with collaboration between the model shop and their digital counterparts. "In the past we had to find ways to hide the rigging," Gawley says. "We had to be able to hold the model on all six axes: bottom, top, port side, starboard side, front, and rear, to hide those model mounts. But the digital department could just erase it so we could actually do more and more things. We used to spend a lot of time hiding things. Now they have just wonderful tools that they can use in computer graphics."

No matter how primitive or advanced

effects were, Gawley insists there's nothing that beats the sun for lighting the models they built. "A lot of our models were environments, and sunlight on a miniature outside looks very real. For Episode I, we built a mini set, so to speak, on a backlot, and it was on wheels so we could shoot motion control outside any time of the day. The reason we could do that was we could rotate the set to the sun. So we could keep that similar—the same light setup for that particular shot."

That lighting technique is something that dates back to the dawn of cinema. Thomas Edison's movie studio, "Black Maria," operated on the exact same principle. It was a full-size set with glass ceilings built on a turntable to get the most out of the sun over the course of the day.

One model maker whose specialty was lighting is another name you might recognize: Grant Imahara. Imahara was seven years old when the first *Star Wars* film came out and, from that moment on, became a lifelong fan. Before he became



STEVE GAWLEY:
“These behind-the-scenes photos represent a small fraction of the miniature photography models, sets and characters that the ILM model shop made for *The Phantom Menace*. I’m very proud of the work that these talented men and women of the ILM model shop completed for the film.”

“A few years later, several practical model makers made the transition to the digital model shop. Today, many of the remaining practical model makers work for a company near the old ILM. They produce practical, working life-size ‘training trauma mannequins’ for the United States military. The mannequins are used to train military medics on how to treat severe trauma injuries sustained in the battlefield. The mannequins simulate very impressive injury actions that would be sustained during battle... Not for the faint-hearted.”

Opposite page:
“This is the ILM Model Shop crew photo from *The Phantom Menace*, taken on the miniature set of Theed City. There were about 20 people missing from the photo that day. Group photos are often not planned in advance, hence the missing people.” (From the personal collection of Steve Gawley)



GRANT IMAHARA PERSONALLY RIGGED THE NEON LIGHTS FOR THE EXTERIOR OF DEX'S DINER.

a star on shows like *Mythbusters*, he spent ten years working in the model shop at ILM, and worked on all of the *Star Wars* prequels. “The realization that you’re creating something that will be part of this film legacy is a whole different level of excitement,” he reveals.

Imahara took a special pleasure in working on the Trade Federation battleships, which he viewed as the prequels’ version of a Star Destroyer. “I did that with a combination of neon lights around the outer perimeter, fluorescent lights that feed into fiber optics for the main body, and then I started to incorporate a lot more cold cathode tubes. It was probably

my favorite because it was one of the biggest ships we’d done in the model shop. It was between eight and ten feet in diameter. It was massive.”

Making these models would be even easier today, according to Imahara. “You can go on Amazon now and order a string of LED lights for less than \$12,” he explains. “If you wanted to, you could even have it arrive the same day. I would have killed for something like that in 1999. When I was working on *The Phantom Menace*, if you wanted a string of LEDs, you had to wire them one by one by yourself.”

Imahara used the best technology he could get his hands

on to light the models on Coruscant, even personally rigging the neon lights for the exterior of Dex’s Diner, and the whole street it sat on.

CITY BUILDING

Digital technology helped advance the model building in other ways as well. Laser cutters, precursors in some ways to 3D printing, were on the cutting edge of technology and required computer aided design (CAD) to manipulate. As one of the younger engineers in the shop, Imahara took it upon himself to help the other, more old school, model makers learn this new digital skill, as well as hone his own models with it. “Eventually, I ended up teaching a class, and most of them ended up

This page, from top:
“This is the battle droid ILM model shop crew photo. We built 10 of these full size droids. They were white when we sent them to England for the shoot. After they arrived, George Lucas changed the paint scheme to a tan color that appears in the finished film.” (From the personal collection of Steve Gawley); Dex’s Diner, a practical model lit by Grant Imahara.



using the laser cutter for their own projects," Imahara says. "I laser cut the entire floor of Theed City. Theed was a huge project. There were lots of parts of buildings and other details, small railings, things like that, that are ideal for the laser."

In addition to their fascinating insights into the model making process, Gawley and Bies were also keen to highlight some moments that audiences might be surprised to discover were created using clever physical effects.

One of Gawley's favorites came from the podrace, which was shot with more practical effects than audiences would guess. "One of the things that I liked most was a shot in *The Phantom Menace* where Anakin and Sebulba were racing," he says. "Sebulba's bolts broke loose and he skidded on the ground, flipped up, and landed, and so forth, and we did it a couple times. We added this little piece of wood on the set floor on the outside shoot and disguised it as a rock. We catapulted the

"MOST PEOPLE THINK SEBULBA'S CRASH WAS DIGITAL. IT WAS A PRACTICAL SHOT."—STEVE GAWLEY

model to flip it up, and people think that's all digital. But that was a practical shot."

"Remember that podracer that goes into the pit and the pit droid gets sucked into the engine and shot off?" Bies asks, with a hint of glee in his voice. "That was a practical effect."

Perhaps one of the most surprising practical effects was Darth Vader's mask coming down on Anakin Skywalker's face at the end of *Revenge of the Sith*. It was actually a 1:1 model built by Bies himself, who'd campaigned to do it physically rather than digitally. "When I was at the archives, Vader's helmet that Luke removes in *Return of the Jedi* was one of my favorite props. We'd never seen the inside of it before, and I got to do that. That's probably my proudest thing that I got to do. I remember very clearly discussing with Ryan Church: It should

look like it goes on, but it doesn't come off easy. So we had a lot of pointy things in there. Some of it was found objects. Those

little, sharp, pointy things were actually hard drive leaders. There were these little connectors we used in electronic plugs called Molex connectors, and they look like little prongs and barbs, so we put those in there. And we laser cut some stuff in there. It was a lot of fun to build. I knew I was building something iconic."

A SENSE OF WONDER

Talking to these model makers, there is a sense of wonder and nostalgia in their voices. Each of them has a story about being awed when BB-8 rolled out onto the stage at *Star Wars* Celebration Anaheim, and Imahara actually confesses to be currently working on one in his garage.

"Of course I miss it," Imahara says.



Opposite page, from top: "Here's a shot of the Mos Espa podrace arena miniature. This large set was filmed outside using motion control photography. The set was on a large revolving table. This allowed the ILM FX camera crew to rotate the set during the day to maintain the lighting conditions. Note the ladder in the upper right background of the photo. That gives you an indication of just how large the miniature set was. Digital elements were added later." (From the personal collection of Steve Gawley); Sebulba crashes in a stunning practical effect!

This page, clockwise from top left: "This is the See-Threepio Anakin Skywalker built in the film. This full size puppet was George's idea for an inexpensive alternative to a computer graphics build. We built this from drawings made by the art director, Doug Chiang; This shows how the See-Threepio full-size puppet operated on stage. Note: His puppeteer, standing directly behind him in a green screen suit, was later extracted from the shot."; "Here's a shot of the queen's ship with the crew that built it. It was shot outside on a miniature set of the Tatooine landscape. We built a small mock up of the model. That was then scanned and refined by the digital model shop. We then took those files, and sent them to a vendor. The vendor sent us back the pieces we needed to make a fuselage casting. The wing tips and engine intakes were machined aluminium. The chrome surface is actually 'buffed aluminium tape'. The result is that the practical model and the digital model are exact copies of each other." (From the personal collection of Steve Gawley)



"In those days, I felt that given enough money and enough time, we had a group of people who were so talented that we could make anything. In the model shop, we brought together so many skill sets; there were carpenters, machinists, mechanics, engineers, painters, sculptors, mold makers, hard surface model makers, creature makers, costumers, people who

knew about fur... It was such an incredible talent pool in the shop in those days. It was also a tremendous feeling that we were always a team and that we would *always* deliver. They used to have a saying that we'd never *not* delivered. The paint might still be drying as we wheeled it onto the shooting stage, and I might still be twisting wires together and soldering things while

we were still on the stage, but we *always* delivered. And we always delivered as a team. Every one of those people was outstanding in what they did, and that's not a feeling you can say that you have all the time. It was certainly true then— when you got to the level of the ILM model shop, the reason you were there is because you were the best." 🍷

Photo of Vanessa Marshall courtesy of Cherie Roberts

VANESSA'S VIEW

HI THERE, FELLOW *STAR WARS* FANS! SO, ONCE AGAIN, *STAR WARS* WEEKENDS WAS ABSOLUTELY AMAZING! I HAVE SO MANY FOND MEMORIES THAT I WILL CHERISH FOREVER—THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE WAS A DREAM COME TRUE. I CAN'T WAIT UNTIL NEXT TIME!

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF *STAR WARS* WEEKENDS 2015

It was wonderful to spend some time with my dear friend Ashley Eckstein. She is such an inspiration. I am deeply grateful for all she has done for fangirls everywhere! She is a truly beautiful person—inside and out!



I really enjoyed the daily parades. It warmed my heart to see so many children smiling and waving with their parents. I think we were all so happy to be there!



As always, James Arnold Taylor was so kind and made the daily *Star Wars Rebels* show such a pleasure.



Signing autographs is always a blast, because I get to meet so many people from all over the world—my *Star Wars* family! I even got to meet a few Twitter friends in person! Here's Daniel Berry from Podcast 66!



Locking lightsabers with Mark Von Ohlen, brand manager of *Star Wars* at Topps, at the autograph signing!



While at Walt Disney World, I went shopping at Darth Mall! I treated myself to some cool stuff. Hope I can get my friends in the *Rebels* cast to sign my collection!



It was awesome to see the Rebel and 501st Legions before the parade began each day.



It was, of course, an honor to meet Warwick Davis (Wicket) and Silas Carson (Ki-Adi-Mundi and Viceroy Nute Gunray).



Everyone went nuts for my Boba Fett dress made by Roderick and Ashley Hopkins, the husband and wife team behind Action Pink Customs. Their mission is simple: "We are all about the fan family! We want to appeal to the fans who are entire families, because we are one. We make what we like, and we hope they like it, too!" And indeed we all did! For more information see: www.Etsy.com/shop/ActionPink or @ActionPink17.

I also met up with Alison Berrios of Cosplay for Jedi, who gave me yet another glorious set of Lekku. I am always blown away by the kindness of *Star Wars* fans! For more information see: www.CosplayForJedi.etsy.com or on twitter @CosplayForJedi. With season one of *Rebels* behind us, there was so much more to discuss with fans, making it an even richer experience. With season two ahead of us, we were all so excited to see what comes next. Overall, the weekend was perfect! It truly was the happiest place on Earth!



Until next year? May the Force be with you!

MORE TO SAY

Follow Vanessa on Twitter: @vanmarshall

HAVE YOU?

A photograph of Robert Watts, an older man with glasses wearing a dark blazer over a white shirt and grey trousers, standing next to a woman with long brown hair wearing a black top and blue jeans. They are on a film set with a large, detailed model of the Millennium Falcon in the background. The text 'BACK ON SET!' is overlaid in large blue letters on the left side of the image.

BACK ON SET!

RESPECTED PRODUCER ROBERT WATTS PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE MAKING OF THE *STAR WARS* ORIGINAL TRILOGY, AND THE FIRST THREE *INDIANA JONES* MOVIES. HE DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS BEING, “12 YEARS OLD WITH 77 YEARS EXPERIENCE!” RECENTLY, HE VISITED THE SET OF *STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS* AND WAS REUNITED WITH SOME OLD FRIENDS! INTERVIEW BY PATRICE GIROD.



Star Wars Insider: During the filming of the first *Star Wars* film, did you think that it would become such a worldwide success?

Robert Watts: I always thought it would work. I felt that the boxoffice of the film would mirror that of a James Bond film.

The universe portrayed in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* was clean, while the *Star Wars* environment was dirty and used. The *Millennium Falcon* needed repairs to hit light speed. This gives the film a reality that appealed to the public and it is, for me, what has made it successful. George Lucas told us that if the first film was a success, there would be others. At the end of the shoot we rented containers and stored the *Millennium Falcon* in the back of the studio in case we needed it for promotional reasons, or a sequel.

Who decided to build a full version of the ship for *The Empire Strikes Back*?

It was suggested by the art department, John Barry and Norman Reynolds.

Did you keep the ship after filming of *The Empire Strikes Back* was completed?

We kept it for *Return of the Jedi*, but I didn't deal with it, because I was already preparing *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. George had given me a new mission to produce the film that was being directed by Steven Spielberg. In *Return of the Jedi*, we do not see the full-sized *Falcon* because it was only used for the sequence of the sandstorm on Tatooine that was cut from the film. When we see the *Falcon* in the movie it's either a model or a matte painting (on glass). (Ed: This sequence can be seen on the *Star Wars* Blu-ray.)

From left to right: Norman Reynolds, Kathleen Kennedy, Robert Watts, and Lawrence Kasdan enjoy a happy reunion in front of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens'* full-sized *Millennium Falcon*!



The full-sized *Millennium Falcon* makes her only appearance in *Return of the Jedi* in a scene that was ultimately deleted from the final movie.



Watts (third from left) is joined by Norman Reynolds (second left) and Irvin Kershner (far right) as *The Empire Strikes Back*'s carbon freeze chamber is constructed.

You recently saw the *Falcon* again, didn't you?

Yes, I went on the set of *The Force Awakens*. As you know, the president of Lucasfilm is Kathleen Kennedy, who I've known for 35 years. We first met on the set of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, where she was the assistant to Steven Spielberg. Then, I produced many films with her. Having worked on the original *Star Wars* trilogy, she kindly invited me on the set to meet the new team. I was invited to visit Pinewood Studios with my old friend, Norman Reynolds, who was the production designer on *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. We talked with Rick Carter, the co-production designer on the film.

What did you think when you heard that George Lucas had appointed her as the new president of Lucasfilm?

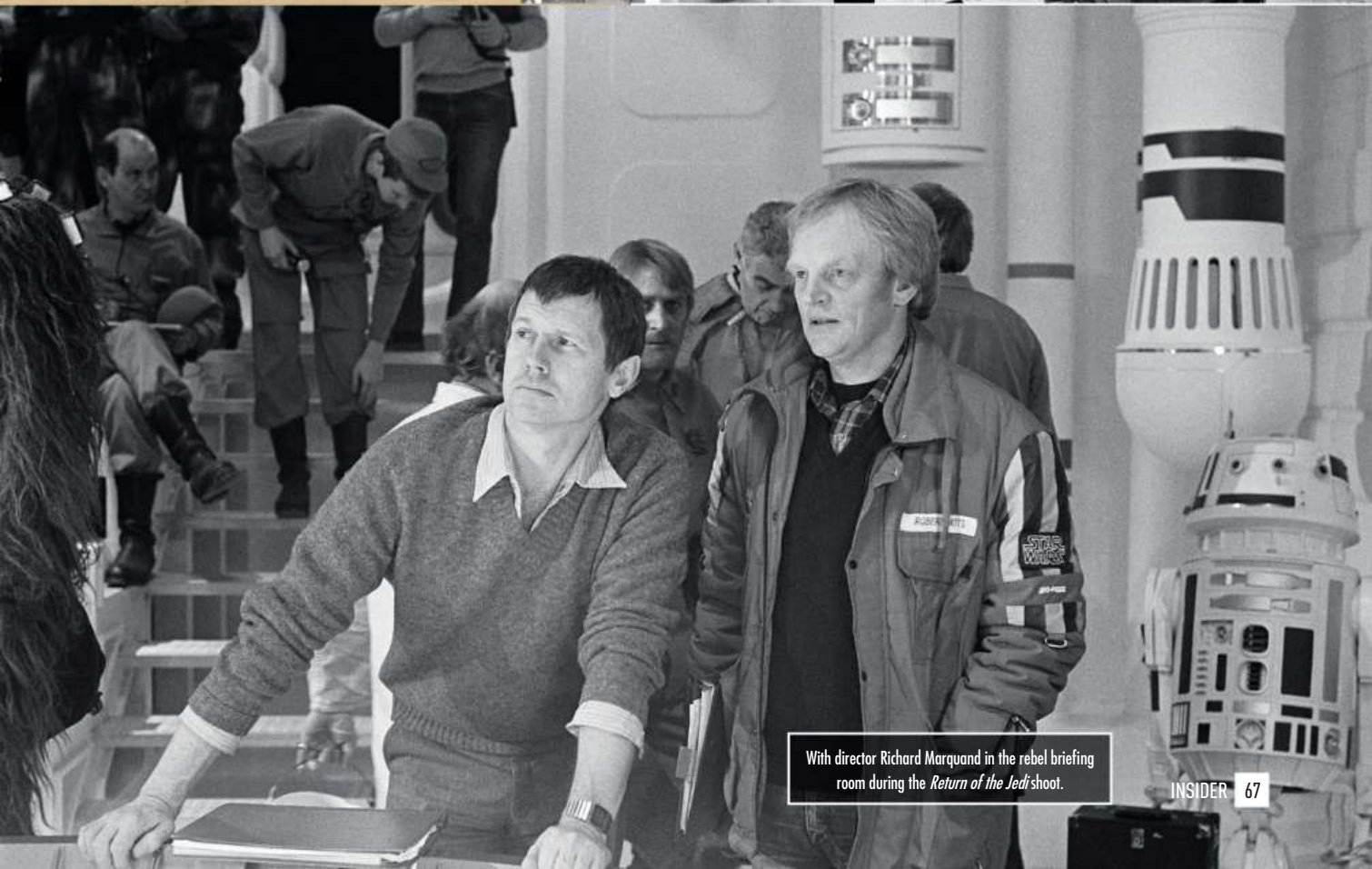
I was vice president of Lucasfilm Ltd., UK, so to see Kathy as president of the entire group is amazing. Today, she is one of the most influential people in Hollywood, and I'm sure she will not stop there. She's a wonderful, brilliant lady, and she's not changed; she's still the Kathy we knew!



Irvin Kershner, Robert Watts, Norman Reynolds, Joe Johnston, Dennis Muren, and Ralph McQuarrie deep in preproduction on *The Empire Strikes Back*.



Watts and Norman Reynolds pose on the Echo Base set during the filming of *The Empire Strikes Back*.



With director Richard Marquand in the rebel briefing room during the *Return of the Jedi* shoot.



A brief cameo as AT-ST driver Lieutenant Watts in *Return of the Jedi*.



Having fun filming *Return of the Ewok*, a short film starring Warwick Davis.



Watts inspects a wampa arm on location in Finse, Norway.

WATTS: THE STORY?

Robert Watts played a major role in the creation of the original *Star Wars* trilogy and the first three *Indiana Jones* movies. He began his film career in 1960 as an assistant on short films and went on to become one of the biggest producers in Hollywood with *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* nearly 30 years later. He's worked with a number of Hollywood superstars, including Robert Mitchum, Rita Hayworth, Steve McQueen, Lee Van Cleef, and Sean Connery. He's worked with the most talented directors, too, such as John Schlesinger, Franklin J. Schaffner, and Roman

Polanski, and participated in two James Bond movies: *Thunderball* (1965) and *You Only Live Twice* (1967). He also worked for over a year with Stanley Kubrick on *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In 1975, his career took a new turn when he was hired by George Lucas to be the production supervisor on *Star Wars*. He was subsequently promoted to associate producer on *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, co-producer on *Return of the Jedi*, and was producer of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. He was appointed vice president of the UK division of Lucasfilm Ltd. Today, although officially retired, Watts is the honorary chairman of ScienceFictionArchives.com and preparing several audio/visual projects.

Did you meet J.J. Abrams?

Yes, I met him. Not only is he a good director, but he's also a big fan of *Star Wars*. Norman and I visited the various departments of production and met people who were all children when the first *Star Wars* came out. Then they all came to see us to discuss our work on the films. J.J. asked us to sign his original poster of *Star Wars*!

Did you meet Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher, and Harrison Ford?

Unfortunately, they weren't around and Harrison was recovering, following his small injury. I've seen Mark and Carrie at various *Star Wars* conventions, but not Harrison, so I asked to return to the set when he had recovered. I made six films with him and I have not seen him since the promotional tour for *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. So I went back with my grandchildren, Ben, Madeleine, Oscar, and Rohan. They took us on board the *Millennium Falcon*. That day, Harrison was filming inside the *Falcon*. By the time I arrived, he was in costume as Han Solo. I called out to him and when he saw me, he kissed me. It was, as you can imagine, a very emotional moment because we had not seen each other for so long—over 25 years! And believe me, Harrison does *not* age! 🍷

MORE TO SAY

Patrice Girod is the director of expositions at the ScienceFictionArchives.com society. You can follow him on Twitter: FacebookGIRODPATRICE / PatriceGirodOff

HAVE YOU?



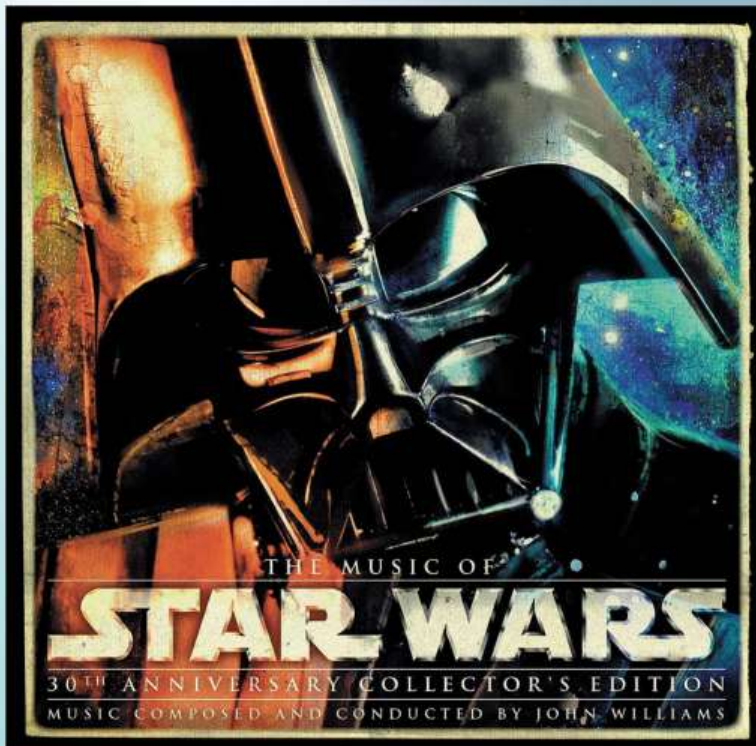
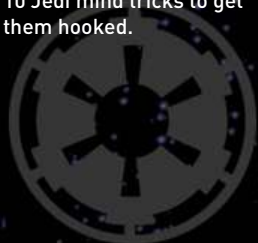
JOIN US!

10 WAYS TO GET SOMEONE HOOKED ON *STAR WARS*—WITHOUT WATCHING A MOVIE! BY DAN BROOKS

As *Star Wars* fans, we often want to follow a certain Jedi Master's advice and pass on what we have learned. And what we have learned—through a story of fathers and sons and daughters, and good and evil and Wookiees—is that *Star Wars* is awesome. As such, we want to share *Star Wars* with our friends, family, girlfriends, boyfriends, co-workers, and anyone who will listen. We want to get them *into* it. But it's not always easy.

People have different tastes. They have biases. They might feel daunted by the expanse of the *Star Wars* universe, or they might not like space fantasy movies, or they might not really like movies at all.

Still, it's possible. There are so many elements within *Star Wars*, and ways to experience *Star Wars*, that you can introduce someone to a galaxy far, far away without having them watch one of the movies. Here are 10 Jedi mind tricks to get them hooked.



1 MAKE THEM A *STAR WARS* MIX

The music written by John Williams for *Star Wars* is a body of work on its own, and there are brilliant compositions throughout. From the "Main Title" to "Yoda's Theme" to "Duel of the Fates" and everything in between, Williams' *Star Wars* music is diverse and rich. Make the non-fan in your life—especially if they're a classical music aficionado—a mix CD of the saga's best. It will be pointless to resist (to quote the Emperor), as you don't need to have seen the films to enjoy their powerful music. That could lead to an interest in seeing the movies and, at the very least, have them humming the "Imperial March" while walking the dog, which would be incredible.

2 BUY THEM COMICS

While many *Star Wars* fans read comics, and many comic book fans love *Star Wars*, there's still a large population in the non-*Star Wars*-liking void of that Venn diagram. But for comic book fans who've never given *Star Wars* a shot, or the friend who enjoys graphic novels, there is hope. *Star Wars* has a huge legacy in comics with many accessible stories. The first trade paperback collections of Marvel's new series (*Star Wars*, *Darth Vader*, and *Princess Leia*) hit stores in the fall, and they're uniformly excellent. Each has all-star creative teams, different tones, and all feel like fresh starts—making them easy places to jump onboard, like a Jedi on a speeder bike.



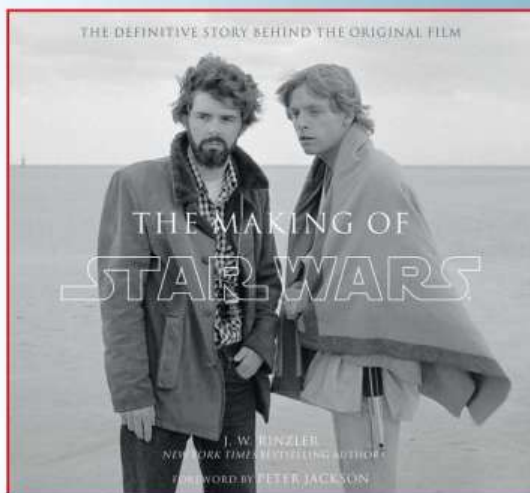
3 SHOW THEM *STAR WARS REBELS* AND *STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS*

If the movies seem like too much of a slog for someone you know, and/or that person loves cartoons, the good folks at Lucasfilm Animation have just the thing. *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* ran for six seasons, telling a wide array of bite-size *Star Wars* stories. *Star Wars Rebels*, just entering its second season on Disney XD, has been a hit with fans old and new. Both animated series feature unique styles, both look completely beautiful, and both tell high-stakes stories that work for children and adults alike. Maybe most importantly, for those just getting into *Star Wars*, they both star a mix of classic characters and original heroes and villains. How cool would it be to get someone into *Star Wars* and have their favorite characters be Ahsoka and Ezra? The answer: very, very cool.



4 GIVE THEM A BEHIND-THE-SCENES BOOK

The work that goes into a *Star Wars* film is awe-inspiring. Over the years, many oversize hardcover books have been released that delve deep into the various disciplines that help make *Star Wars* possible. *Star Wars Costumes* by Brandon Alinger is filled with stunning photography of outfits and accessories from across the saga; the *Star Wars Storyboards* series, edited by J. W. Rinzler shows the original scene layouts in kinetic storyboards; the *Star Wars Art: Concept* book looks at Ralph McQuarrie's wonderful exploration that informed the look of the movies. These titles all speak to different interests and talents—maybe one is shared by the non-fan you know? If so, that could lead to a new appreciation of the films. (Plus, they also look great on any coffee table!)



5 LEND THEM A NOVEL

The number of *Star Wars* stories told in prose far outnumber those told in the films. For the voracious reader in your life, particularly one who loves fiction, a great *Star Wars* novel or book series is a solid gateway into a galaxy far, far away. In Legends continuity, the Timothy Zahn trilogy is classic space fantasy literature on its own; James Luceno's *Darth Plagueis* is a stirring tale of villainy; Joe Schreiber's *Death Troopers* is *Star Wars* meets zombies. Then there are the books from the newly aligned canon, like John Jackson Miller's *Star Wars Rebels* prequel, *A New Dawn* and Paul S. Kemp's *Lords of the Sith*, which focus on different heroes and villains, offering widely diverse *Star Wars* experiences. The common denominator among all these titles is that they're great books on their own, independent of *Star Wars*. In summary, bring the power of the Force to their bookshelf. It can be their first step into a larger world.



6 GET THEM A COLLECTIBLE

Most people, even if they don't know the films backward and forward, know the main characters of *Star Wars*. They also usually like them, which means they wouldn't mind having a toy on their desk or on a shelf at home. In the world of *Star Wars* collectibles, there really is something for everyone: Funko's POP!s have a fun, cartoon-like style; Hasbro's Black Series offers highly-detailed realism and poseability. And there's lots in between. Whatever your non-fan's style, they'll probably love having something *Star Wars*. Then, they'll have to do the research to really know everything about this Boba Fett guy that's guarding their work computer.



7 GIFT THEM A STAR WARS-T-SHIRT

Star Wars design has been cool since Day 1, and it's been cool on apparel since then, too. There are tons of T-shirt options for men, women, and children, and all in different styles: 8-bit interpretations, classic comic book art, distressed logos, anything. By giving one to a non-fan, you'll show them how fashionable the Force can be—and you'll give them something to wear on December 18.



8 PLAY A *STAR WARS* VIDEOGAME WITH THEM

Is your non-fan a gamer? *Star Wars* has a slew of classic videogames under its belt, and more are coming. For the RPG fan there's the critically-acclaimed one-two punch of *Knights of the Old Republic* and *Star Wars: The Old Republic*; for strategy gamers there's the mobile hit *Star Wars: Commander*; for side-scrolling players there's the classic 16-bit *Super Star Wars*. Then, of course, there's *Star Wars: Battlefront*, a gorgeous, innovative shooter that is ushering in a whole new era of *Star Wars* gaming. Once again, none of these really require knowledge of the movies, they all offer different gameplay, and they all hit different gaming buttons, no pun intended: Some are story-driven, some are action-driven, some are something else entirely. But they're all fun, and show what lies inside the *Star Wars* universe. Pro-tip: If they actually beat *Super Star Wars*, treat them to tip #7. It's pretty tough and worthy of a saving-Princess-Leia level reward.



9 WATCH A *STAR WARS* DOCUMENTARY WITH THEM

The only thing that's maybe more interesting than the story of *Star Wars* is the story of *Star Wars*. The story of how George Lucas made a seemingly zany sci-fi film on a small budget and changed everything. There are a few excellent documentaries on the making of the original trilogy, but the two that go the most in-depth are *From Star Wars to Jedi* (a 1983 production narrated by Mark Hamill with really great insight into the creature effects of *Return of the Jedi*), which is available on the official *Star Wars* YouTube channel, and *Empire of Dreams* (a 2004 documentary directed by Kevin Burns, filled with revealing cast and creator interviews). Both films delve into everything from the movies' business challenges to visual effects innovations to how "I love you / I know" happened. They're essential viewing for fans of film, creativity, or just making dreams come true.



10 COOK A *STAR WARS* RECIPE WITH THEM

Star Wars has inspired fan creativity in lots of ways, from costuming to crafting. Among the most popular forms of *Star Wars* expression, however, is food. That's right—there's Wookiee Cookies, Hoth Chocolate, Great Pit of Carkoon Bundt Cakes, and lots more. Most finished dishes actually look like a character or creature, adding a whole other layer of fun (and, potentially, frosting, if you're making a Jabba the Hutt-themed dessert) to the process. Combining the Jedi and culinary arts is a no-brainer, and cooking a *Star Wars* recipe with a friend is a fun way to introduce them to characters, locales, and lingo. For the non-fan that's a foodie, it doesn't take a trip to a movie theater to realize *Star Wars*' greatness; they just need to get creative in the kitchen.

No matter what technique you choose, you'll enjoy spreading the galactic gospel, and you may just turn someone to the *Star Wars* side of fandom. Just be sure to mention up front—they have to pay for their own Celebration ticket!



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THE LATEST FROM THE WORLD OF *STAR WARS* PUBLISHING! WORDS: DAN WALLACE

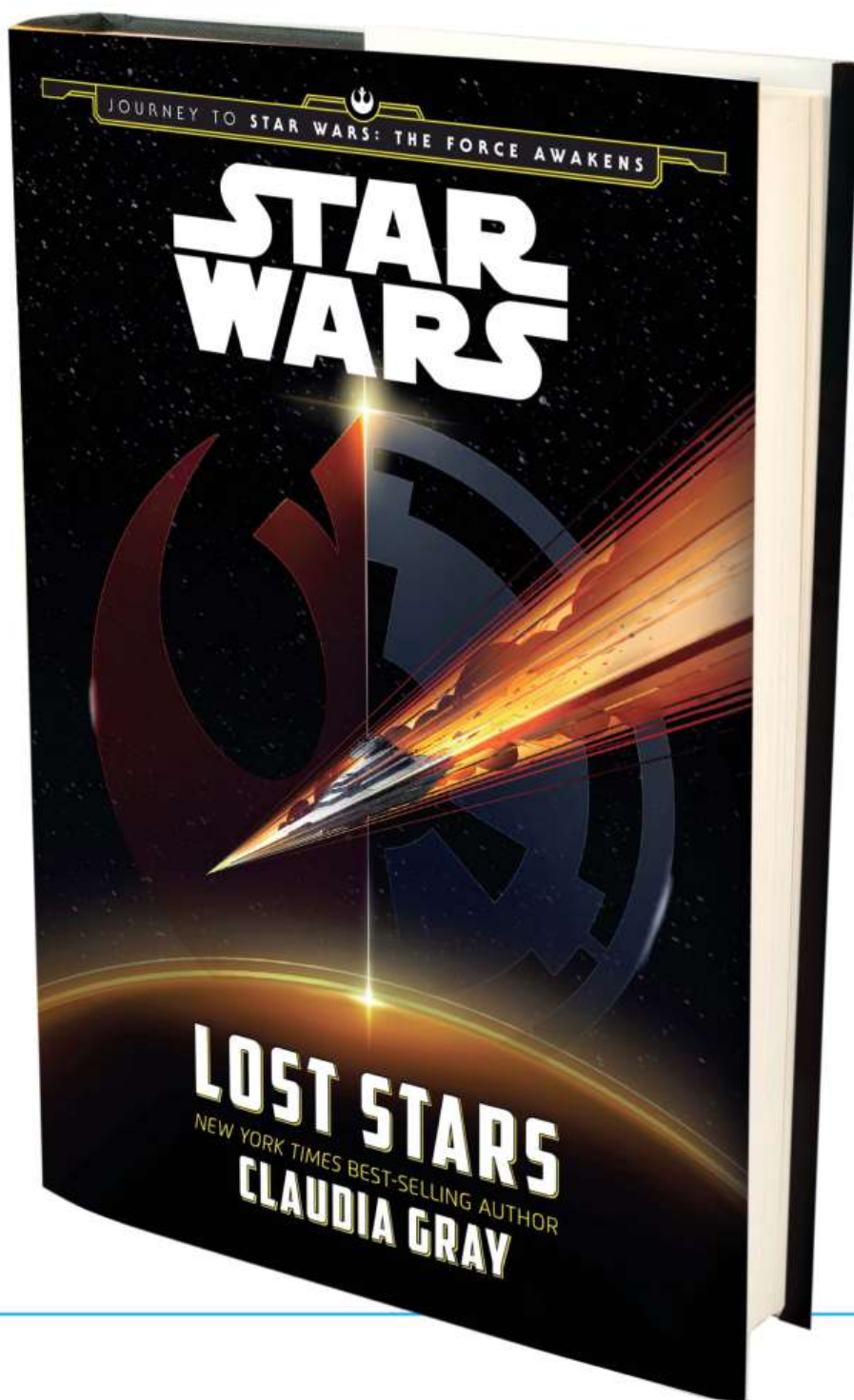
STAR CROSSED

CAN OPPOSING FACTIONS EVER REUNITE? FIND OUT IN *LOST STARS*, PART OF JOURNEY TO *STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS*

Released by Disney Lucasfilm Press on September 4 as part of the *Journey to Star Wars: The Force Awakens* publishing program is the first young adult *Star Wars* novel. *Lost Stars*, written by *New York Times* bestselling author Claudia Gray, covers events on both sides of the *Star Wars* galaxy—from the rise of the Rebellion to the fall of the Empire.

Two childhood friends—Ciena Ree and Thane Kyrell—provide perspective on the political turmoil that divides the galaxy. Though Thane is an aristocrat on the Outer Rim planet of Jelucan and Ciena a humble villager, the pair bond over their shared love of piloting. They attend the Imperial Academy together, but a close encounter with the Empire's brutal peace-keeping techniques is enough to turn Thane away from the path of the Emperor's propaganda. He finds friends among the burgeoning Rebellion, but Ciena is still an Imperial loyalist.

Now on opposite sides of the war, can the two friends find a way to reunite, or will their devotion to duty lead them to mutual destruction? *Lost Stars* is an adventure of love and loss, and helps set the stage for readers for the *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* premiere in December.



PICTURE BOX

ICONIC IMAGES BECOME SHAREABLE COLLECTIBLES IN *STAR WARS FRAMES: 100 POSTCARDS*

George Lucas selected his favorite images from the six *Star Wars* films for inclusion in the original *Star Wars Frames* art book. Now, Abrams is releasing 100 of the same iconic stills in postcard form, each of them ready for display, framing, or dropping into a mailbox to send to a friend.

With an eye for composition and a breadth of subject matter from classic characters to stunning scenery, *Star Wars Frames: 100 Postcards* is a visual summary of the best moments from the entire saga to date. The postcards are packaged inside a deluxe keepsake box, designed to mirror the larger slipcase packaging from the original *Star Wars Frames* book. The box also functions as a display frame, since its die-cut window allows fans to rotate their favorite scenes into view.

Star Wars Frames: 100 Postcards will be released by Abrams Noterie on November 10, 2015. Don't miss this chance to celebrate *Star Wars* as a masterpiece of cinematography and design!



GET CRAFTY

KNIT YOUR OWN HEROES AND VILLAINS ALIKE WITH *STAR WARS CROCHET*

Crochet fans are passionate about their hobby, and *Star Wars* fans are crazy about the galaxy far, far away. Mix the two together and you get *Star Wars Crochet*, the book and starter kit that promise to take you on an interstellar crafting adventure.

Written by crocheting expert and sci-fi fan Lucy Collin, *Star Wars Crochet* features easy-to-follow instructions that make it the perfect book—whether you're a pro or a Padawan. In the box is everything you need to get started, including yarn, a crochet hook, a needle, stuffing, and eye beads. With the material in *Star Wars Crochet* you can make your own Yoda and stormtrooper, and the 76-page book also provides details for Boba Fett, C-3PO, Chewbacca, Darth Vader, Wicket the Ewok, Han Solo, Jabba the Hutt, Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, and R2-D2.

Whether your creations are for sharing, reenacting, or displaying, who can resist such a cute cast of knitted characters?



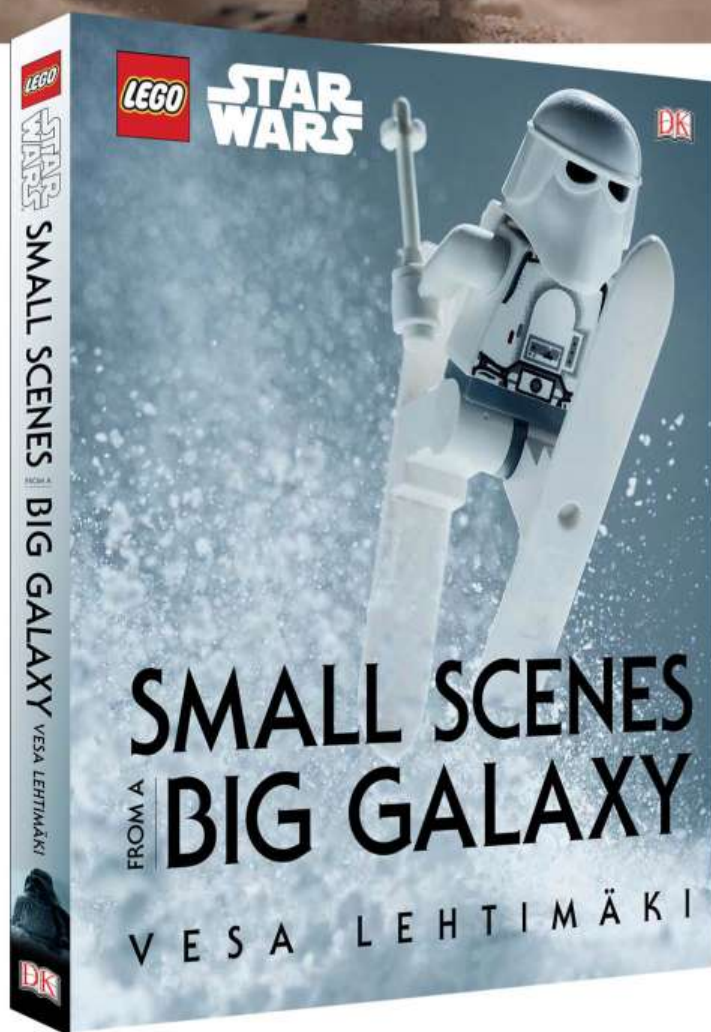
SNAPSHOTS IN BRICK

LEGO STAR WARS: SMALL SCENES FROM A BIG GALAXY IS FILLED WITH ONE-OF-A-KIND MOMENTS

Star Wars and LEGO have enjoyed a long, fruitful relationship together that has produced toys, animated adventures, and video games. But this November 10, fans will see a side of the LEGO Star Wars universe that's never been seen before.

From DK Publishing and Finnish photographer Vesa Lehtimäki comes *LEGO Star Wars: Small Scenes from a Big Galaxy*, a unique photography collection featuring painstaking recreations of classic Star Wars movie moments and irreverent takes on the LEGO Star Wars universe. Vesa Lehtimäki used his son's favorite toys to create the images in the book, and each spread is a showcase of positioning, perspective, focus, color, and imagination. Throughout the book, Lehtimäki reveals the thought process behind his staging or the difficulties he encountered during setup, such as the mosquitoes and biting ants that plagued him while shooting a speeder bike pilot in the woods (and the tissue paper he burned to create wafts of what would appear to be early-morning haze). Other original compositions include "The Thing With the Blue Milk," in which Tusken Raiders shoot up the Mos Eisley cantina, and "Powdered!" in which a skiing Darth Vader takes a tumble and loses his helmet, much to the horror of three stormtrooper observers.

The 176-page hardcover will be available from November 10.



SHATTERED EMPIRE

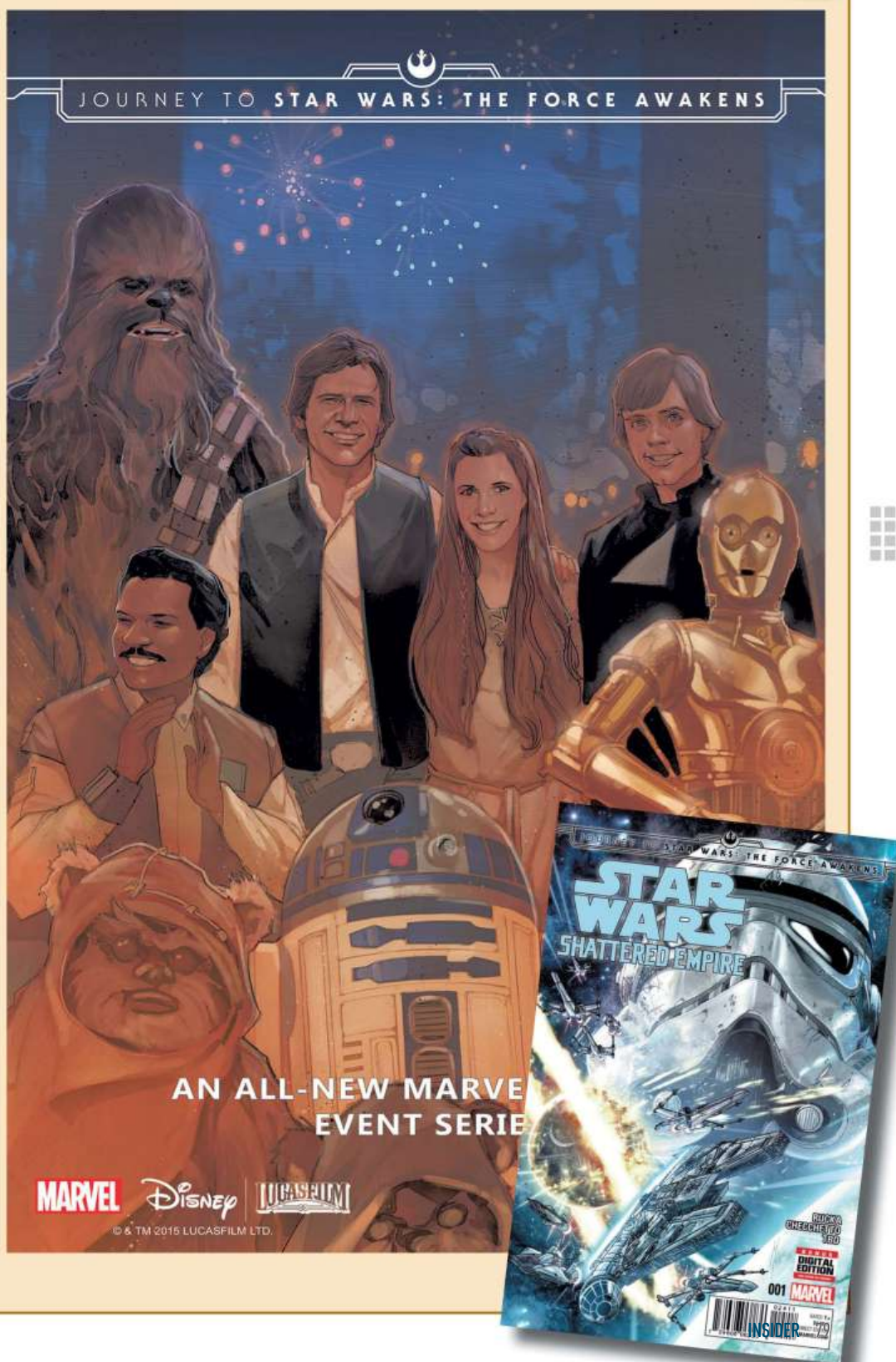
JOURNEY TO STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS INCLUDES THIS CAN'T-MISS EPIC!

THE
VERY BEST
STAR WARS
COMICS!

The *Journey to Star Wars: The Force Awakens* publishing program has included coordinated fiction releases for both books and comics, but *Shattered Empire* is one of its biggest stories yet. For the first time in the new comics continuity, this four-issue limited series chronicles events in the *Star Wars* galaxy after the destruction of the second Death Star in *Return of the Jedi*.

With the Rebel Alliance's victory at Endor and the death of Emperor Palpatine, the Imperial war machine splits into fragments. It is here that the comics series, aptly named *Shattered Empire*, picks up. Written by Greg Rucka (*Punisher*, *Wolverine*, *Gotham Central*) with art by Marco Checchetto (*Avengers World*, *Punisher*), the series also features covers by Phil Noto.

Issues #1 and #2 will be published in September, with issues #3 and #4 following in October. Pick them up every other week as they're released to get the story as quickly as possible, and keep an eye out for a collected edition coming soon after. The 136-page trade paperback collection of *Star Wars: Shattered Empire* will reprint all four issues of the limited series, plus two bonus stories: issue #1 of *Princess Leia*, and issue #1 of *Star Wars* (the original, blast-from-the-past Marvel release from 1977).



BIG GALAXY, BIG ADVENTURE

IT'S A BUSY TIME FOR *STAR WARS* COMICS WITH MARVEL'S LATEST RELEASES

Star Wars: *The Force Awakens* is on every fan's mind right now, but Marvel is keeping up the momentum on comics stories from every corner of the galaxy far, far away:

STAR WARS: LANDO

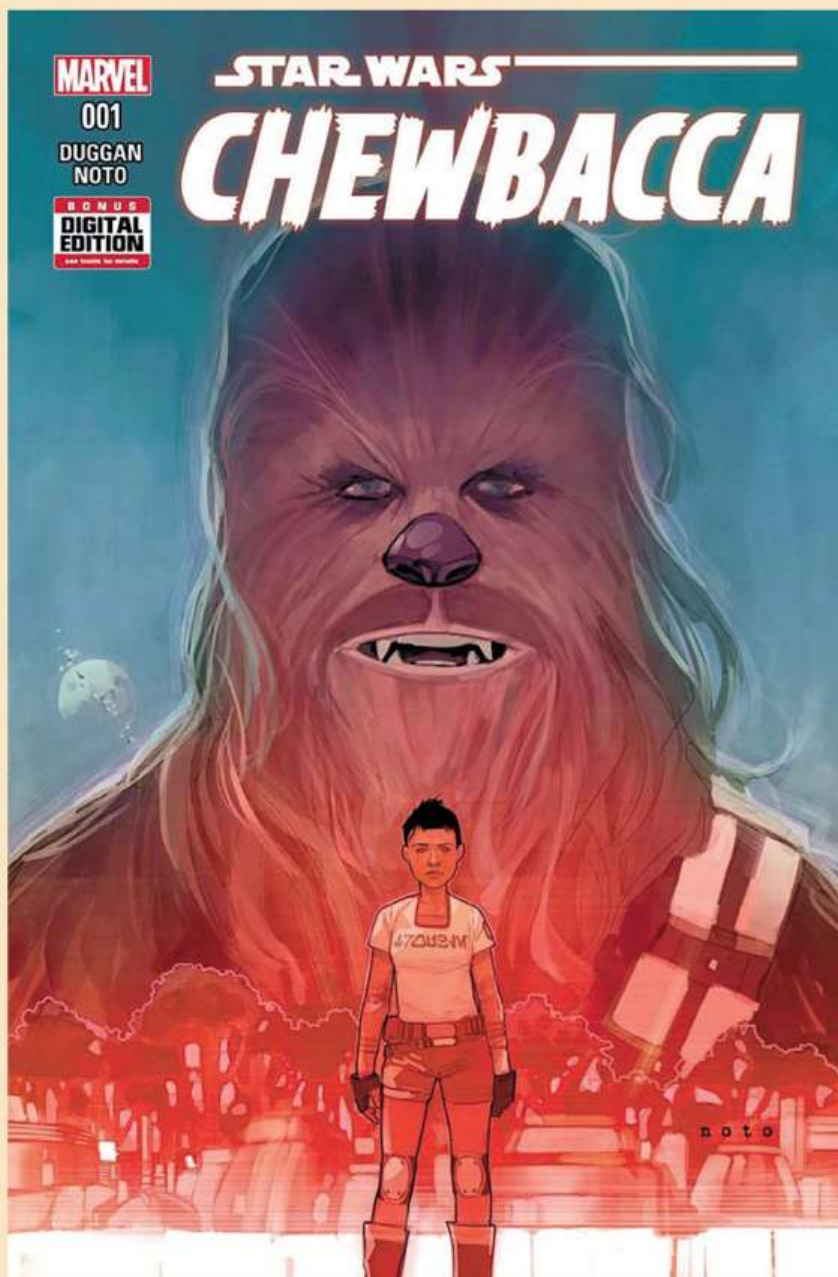
The five-issue limited series wraps up on September 30, with an outrageous caper written by Charles Soule with art and covers by Alex Maleev. What began as the heist of a lifetime has turned into a struggle for survival for Lando and Lobot. Forget about an easy payday—when this caper ends, the two of them will have their lives changed forever.

KANAN ISSUES #6 AND #7

Tying in with the hit animated TV series *Star Wars Rebels*, *Kanan* reveals the backstory of ex-Jedi Kanan Jarrus before he fell in with the rebel cell on Lothal. Written by Greg Weisman (former executive producer of *Star Wars Rebels*) with art by Jacopo Camagni, these two issues jump ahead to the timeframe of *Rebels* (as the adult Kanan faces his past on the planet Kaller) and back to the days of the Clone Wars (as Kanan, AKA Jedi Padawan Caleb Dume, takes his first steps into the galaxy-wide conflict).

CHEWBACCA

October 14 sees the kick-off of this five-part miniseries, in a story written by Gerry Duggan (*Deadpool*, *Hulk*) with art by Phil Noto (*Black Widow*, *X-23*, *Uncanny X-Force*). The mighty Chewbacca doesn't have Han Solo to back him up in this adventure—not after the Wookiee warrior crash-lands his ship on an Imperial-occupied planet. The stranded Chewbacca is soon caught between his duty to return to the Rebel Alliance and his obligation to help a young girl against the Empire. Issue #1 will be sold with variant covers including those by Alex Ross, Skottie Young, and other notable artists.



GIVE YOUR BOOKSHELF A STAR WARS MAKEOVER

MARVEL'S LATEST COMICS COLLECTIONS SPAN THE *STAR WARS* ERAS

If you've missed any of the new Marvel *Star Wars* releases, the quickest way to get up to speed on the new canon is to snap up these latest collections. In addition, new classic editions include *Dark Times* comics (rebranded under the Legends banner), and a restored edition of Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson's 1983 comic book adaptation of *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*.

STAR WARS: DARTH VADER VOL. 1

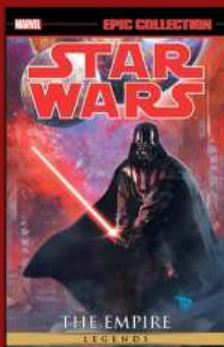
Collecting issues #1-6 of the ongoing *Darth Vader* series in trade paperback, this volume showcases Vader's solo adventures following *Star Wars: Episode IV A New Hope*, and provides the Imperial perspective in the fight to squash the Rebel Alliance. As Vader undertakes a private investigation into the Emperor's affairs, he enlists help from the weapons scavenger Aphra and returns to Geonosis to construct a mechanized army of battle droids—actions that feature guest appearances from Jabba the Hutt, Boba Fett, and more. *Darth Vader* Vol. 1 is written by Kieron Gillen and penciled by Salvador Larroca, with a cover by Adi Granov. It goes on sale October 7.



STAR WARS LEGENDS EPIC COLLECTION: THE EMPIRE VOL. 2

The comics released in the early part of this decade were some of the best *Star Wars* stories of their era, and now, a new Legends trade paperback collects the cream of the crop. This collection gathers *Star Wars: Dark Times* issues #6-17, *Dark Times—Blue Harvest* issue #0, and *Dark Times—Out of the Wilderness* issues #1-5. The setting is the “dark times” era

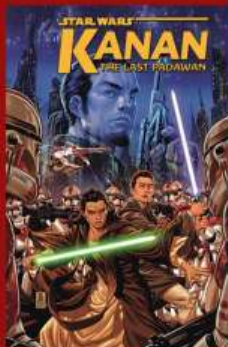
following *Revenge of the Sith*, and both Jedi Master K'ruhk and Jedi Master Dass Jennir are marked for execution after evading the death sentence of Order 66. Darth Vader is on the hunt for Jennir and nothing will stand in his way, not even Jennir's allies from the seedier side of the galaxy—and the deadly assassin Falco Sang is there to ensure the job gets done. Written by Randy Stradley and penciled by Dave Ross and Douglas Wheatley, the 440-page volume features a cover by Dave Wilkins and is available beginning October 21.



STAR WARS: KANAN—THE LAST PADAWAN VOL. 1

Collecting the first six issues of this *Star Wars Rebels* tie-in series, the trade paperback is written by *Rebels* executive producer Greg Weisman, penciled by Pepe Larraz, and features a cover by Mark Brooks.

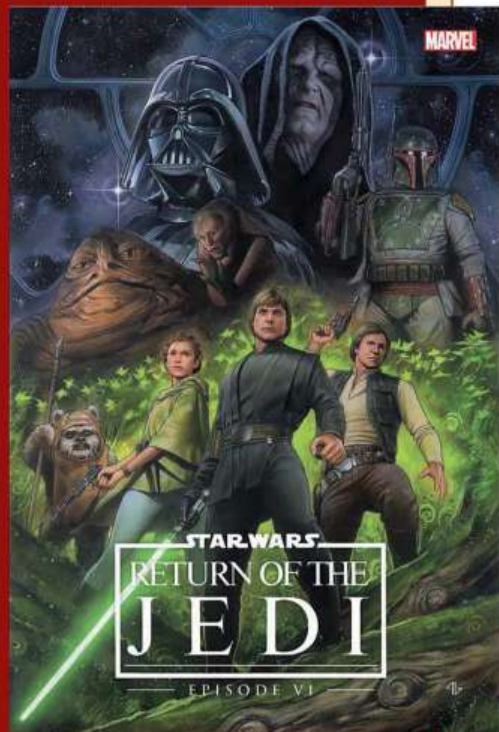
Kanan Jarrus might be a cocky, sarcastic renegade who fights the Empire alongside the crew of the *Ghost*, but he hides a secret past as a Jedi Padawan that marks him as a high-profile target for the Empire's Inquisitors. In this collection, readers meet Kanan *before* he was Kanan, during the Clone Wars when he went by the name Caleb Dume. As a Jedi Padawan in training under Jedi Master Depa Billaba, he is blindsided by



the clone trooper betrayal of Order 66 and is forced to survive after the death of his master. This 136-page volume bridges the timeframe between *Revenge of the Sith* and *Star Wars Rebels* and goes on sale November 4.

STAR WARS: EPISODE VI RETURN OF THE JEDI

Talk about vintage! Travel back to 1983 with this hardcover volume, which collects issues #1-4 of the original miniseries that adapted *Return of the Jedi* in comic book form. Written by Archie Goodwin with pencils by the legendary Al Williamson, this remastered edition presents all the action as fans experienced it more than three decades ago. Watch Luke Skywalker confront Jabba the Hutt and face his destiny with Darth Vader as the classic *Star Wars* trilogy reaches its epic conclusion! The 112-page volume features a cover by Adi Granov and goes on sale November 11.





INCOMING

THE LATEST *STAR WARS* GEAR YOU'LL WANT TO ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION! WORDS: JAMES BURNS

HASBRO //////////////////////////////////////

THE BLACK SERIES FIRST ORDER SPECIAL FORCE TIE FIGHTER 6-INCH SCALE

Hasbro surprised everybody with its Comic-Con International: San Diego reveals, with the biggest surprise also the largest, in the form of a 6-inch scale First Order Special Force TIE fighter! This will be available to buy starting *Force Friday*, September 4th.

Standing at an impressive 26-inches high, this is the largest vehicle that Hasbro has ever produced for The Black Series collector-focused line and features incredible detail, including movie-accurate wings and a redesigned cockpit that seats two, as taken directly from *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. This newly designed TIE fighter comes with an exclusive 6-inch scale First Order Elite TIE fighter pilot. Available: Now
Price: \$169.99



THE BLACK SERIES FORCE FX LIGHTSABERS

Hasbro's line of Force FX lightsabers features improved sound and lights, and an all-new stand that displays the lightsaber as if it's floating in midair. The first two designs to benefit from the upgrade are Darth Vader and Yoda.

Available: Fall 2015

Price: TBD





THE BLACK SERIES 6-INCH SCALE FIGURES

Four new sculpts of 6-inch figures from The Black Series line were previewed at Comic-Con International: San Diego. From *Star Wars Rebels*: Ahsoka Tano, and a new, realistic version of Kanan Jarrus. *Attack of the Clones*' Jango Fett, and Luke Skywalker as seen in *A New Hope*, were also on display.

In addition, the results of the fans' choice poll were announced—the winner being Expanded Universe favorite Darth Revan. Sabine Wren came in a close second, leading to an announcement from Hasbro that they would also make the young female Mandalorian too, with interchangeable heads—with and without her helmet.

Available: Spring/Summer 2016

Price: \$19.95

STAR WARS REBELS 3.75-INCH SCALE FIGURES

Comic-Con International: San Diego also offered a glimpse of some new characters from Season Two of *Star Wars Rebels* in the 3.75-inch line (featuring five points of articulation)—the brand new Inquisitor, and old Captain Rex.

Available: TBD

Price: TBD



THE BLACK SERIES TITANIUM SERIES VEHICLE ASSORTMENT

The Titanium line of vehicles from Hasbro makes a triumphant return, starting *Force Friday*, with a fleet of premium vehicles from the entire *Star Wars* saga. The range includes AT-ATs, B-wings, landspeeders, *Slave I*, snowspeeders, TIE Advanceds, X-wings, and a Y-wing, with more great vehicles to be announced!

Available: Now

Price: \$4.99 each



GENTLE GIANT

LUKE SKYWALKER—HERO OF YAVIN MINI BUST

Earlier in the year Gentle Giant put the Han Solo Hero of Yavin Mini Bust up for pre-order, but you can't have Han without Luke. So, at Comic-Con International: San Diego, Gentle Giant revealed the Luke Skywalker Hero of Yavin Mini Bust as the perfect companion piece, available in early 2016.

Gentle Giant takes great pride in its craft, and this mini bust has been digitally scanned, using archival footage and designs, to produce a high-quality, hand-painted polystone bust that comes complete with matching certificate of authenticity.

Available: 2016

Price: \$95

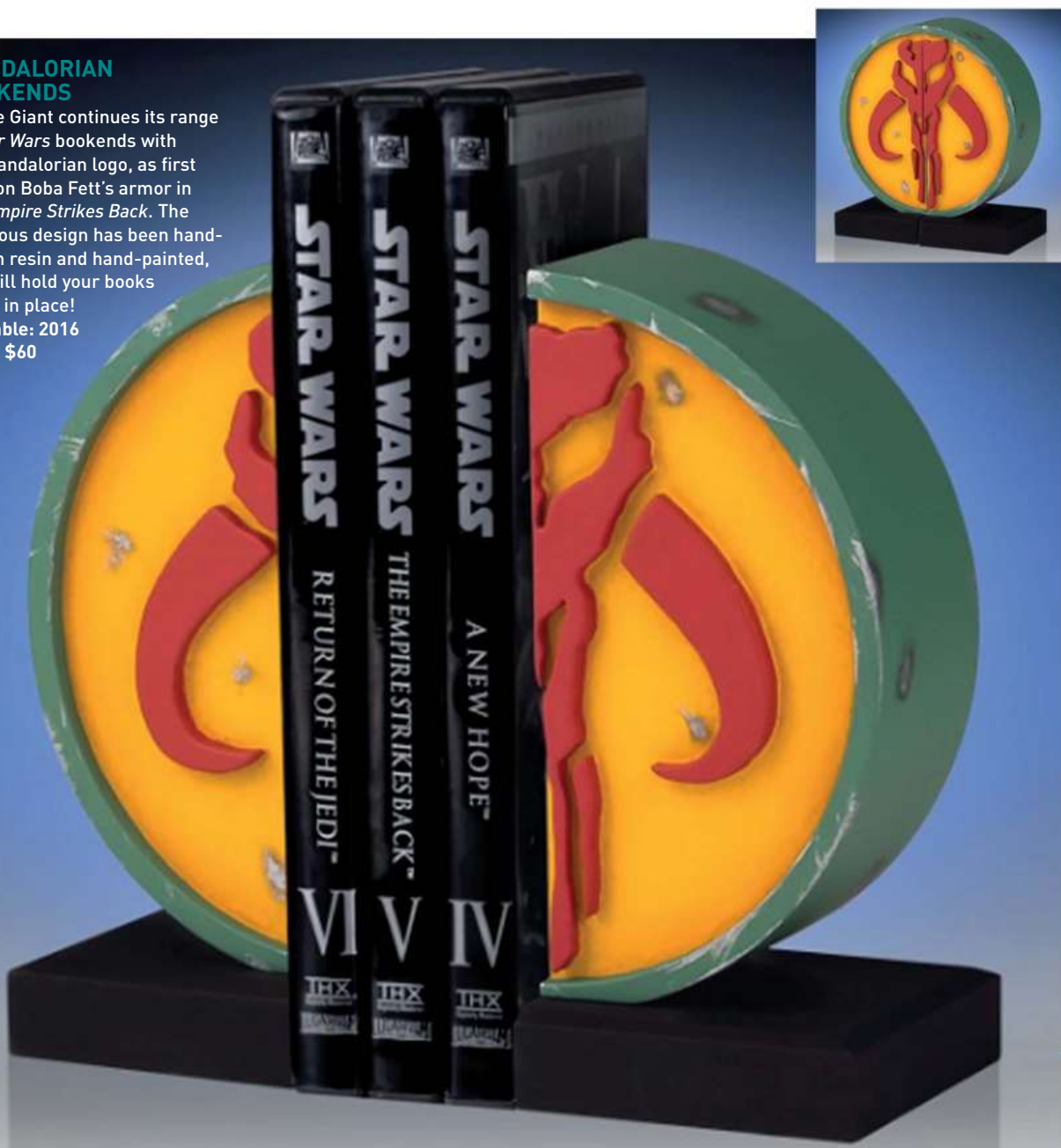


MANDALORIAN BOOKENDS

Gentle Giant continues its range of *Star Wars* bookends with the Mandalorian logo, as first seen on Boba Fett's armor in *The Empire Strikes Back*. The infamous design has been hand-cast in resin and hand-painted, and will hold your books safely in place!

Available: 2016

Price: \$60



FUNKO

FUNKO POP! VINYL BOBBLE HEAD— SANDTROOPER & DEWBACK 2-PACK

The stylized design of Funko's 4-inch tall Pop! Vinyl bobble heads continues to delight and excite collectors. This set features a sandtrooper and dewback from *A New Hope*. Available: Now at Walmart
Price: TBD



HALLMARK



The itty bittys—4-inch plush characters from Hallmark—have grown in popularity since their launch last year, with many new designs being added to the range throughout 2015, and hopefully beyond. Available now are five new characters—a Hoth 4-pack set which includes new versions of Han and Luke, along with a tauntaun and a wampa. A stormtrooper is also available on its own.

Available: Now at Hallmark Gold Crown Stores
Price: Hoth Set \$29.95, Stormtrooper \$6.95



FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES

The fine folks at Fantasy Flight Games keep the dice rolling and the play coming with the seventh wave of products for the wildly-popular X-Wing miniatures game. The new wave introduces new starships to each of the game's three factions, including two for the Scum and Villainy faction and one each for the Rebels and Imperials.

X-WING: HOUND'S TOOTH EXPANSION PACK

A modified YV-666 light freighter, the *Hound's Tooth* is the signature vessel of one of the galaxy's most notorious bounty hunters and slavers, the fearsome Trandoshan Bossk. The *Hound's Tooth* expansion pack brings this infamous freighter to life as a towering, large-base miniature starship for the Scum and Villainy faction, rendered at the game's standard 1/270 scale. You'll also find four YV-666 ship cards, a new mission, and 13 upgrades, including the *Hound's Tooth* Title, which allows your YV-666 pilot to survive imminent destruction by escaping aboard the *Nashtah Pup*, a unique Z-95 Headhunter.

The *Hound's Tooth* expansion pack also comes with a ship card for the *Nashtah Pup* and the rules for deploying it, though to fly it, you'll need the miniature starship from the Most Wanted expansion pack or Z-95 Headhunter expansion pack.

Available: Now

Price: \$39.95



X-WING: KIHRAZX FIGHTER EXPANSION PACK

Modeled after Incom's popular X-wing starfighter, the versatile Kihraxz was developed specifically for the Black Sun crime syndicate, whose highly-paid ace pilots demanded a nimble, powerful ship to match their skills. It arrives to X-Wing as a well-rounded, small-base, Scum and Villainy starship with three attack, two agility, four hull, and one shield. Players gain one of these miniature starfighters in the Kihraxz Fighter Expansion Pack, carefully pre-painted and sculpted at the game's standard 1/270 scale. Additionally, the Kihraxz Fighter Expansion Pack comes with four ship cards, five upgrades, a maneuver dial, and all the tokens you need to fly this fighter into any battle in which the galaxy's scum have a vested interest!

Available: Now

Price: \$14.95



X-WING: K-WING EXPANSION PACK

A heavily armed bomber that could double as an escort or reconnaissance vessel, the Rebellion's K-wing was frequently flown on strafing runs against planetary targets and slow-moving capital ships. In X-Wing, the K-wing's surprising acceleration, heavy armor plating, and devastating ordnance make it an outstanding ship for hit-and-run operations. Its four shields make it one of the game's most durable small base fighters, and it pairs this durability with a primary turret weapon that boasts an attack value of two. On top of this, the ship comes with the new **SLAM** action, which allows it to race across the battlefield and deploy its bombs at an unprecedented speed.

In addition to its pre-painted K-wing miniature, sculpted at 1/270 scale, the K-Wing Expansion Pack comes with four ship cards and nine upgrades that dramatically improve the efficiency of your ordnance.

Available: Now

Price: \$19.95



X-WING: TIE PUNISHER EXPANSION PACK

A beefier version of the TIE bomber, the TIE punisher built upon that starfighter's success by adding shielding, a second bomb chute, and three additional ordnance pods, each equipped with a twin ion engine. It comes to X-Wing as a devastating Imperial starship in the TIE Punisher Expansion Pack, accompanied by four ship cards and a punishing array of nine explosive upgrades, with which you can obliterate your enemies. In addition to boasting a slightly larger payload than the TIE bomber, the TIE punisher invites Imperial players to perfect their bombing skills by taking advantage of both its innate boost action and its ability to equip a system upgrade like Advanced Sensors. With Advanced Sensors, the TIE punisher can boost into position to drop a bomb right in front of an enemy fighter, and then immediately perform its maneuver to fly away.

Available: Now

Price: \$19.95

HER UNIVERSE //

BACK TO SCHOOL

Ashley Eckstein, the voice of Ahsoka Tano in *The Clone Wars* and *Star Wars Rebels*, wants to help younglings back to school with an amazing array of new products from Her Universe. The Back to School range is available now, and features some great new products including T-shirts, cardigans, linen bags, and more. Be seen and be proud to wear *Star Wars* both in and out of school!

Visit www.heruniverse.com for the latest updates!

**SNEAK
PEEK!**





VOL
92

BANTHA TRACKS

BY THE FANS
FOR THE FANS



Star Wars newcomers John Boyega (Finn), Daisy Ridley (Rey), and Oscar Isaac (Poe Dameron) field questions from audience members at *The Force Awakens* panel. (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images)



A DAY LONG REMEMBERED



Unless you've been living under a rock on the dark side of Dathomir, you might have felt a tremor in the Force emanating recently from the bright center of the pop culture universe, Comic-Con International: San Diego. This year's convention was a big one for both fans and Disney/Lucasfilm, as it was the first Comic-Con in a decade to celebrate an upcoming *Star Wars* movie and to offer up a super-secret surprise *Star Wars* concert as a thank you to fans—but more on that later.

In the months prior to Comic-Con, I was asked to write up an article for the program book that explored Lucasfilm's 39-year history at the event, which began back in 1976. I was surprised to learn that while *Star Wars* enjoyed a pretty pronounced presence at the con pre-1983 (*Return of the Jedi*) and post-1997 (*Star Wars* Special Editions),

Lucasfilm had very little to offer at the con in the years between; no panels for 1988's fantasy *Willow*, nothing for the first three *Indiana Jones* movies, and not a feather of fanfare for 1970s comic book icon and 1986 movie, *Howard the Duck*. Apparently, Lucasfilm has reserved its presence at Comic-Con almost exclusively for *Star Wars* fans, a tradition that just took on a whole new dimension for the 2015 event.

Star Wars fans received two big firsts at this year's Comic-Con: They witnessed the gathering of players from two *Star Wars* trilogies—the original trilogy and the one to come—and got a free *Star Wars* concert to boot. The “stunt,” as it was referred to internally, was so top secret that even Lucasfilm employees attending the evening of July 10th didn't know about it until it was announced at the end of *The Force Awakens* panel (which, incidentally, I couldn't get into—space was that tight!). Following the panel, all 6,000-plus guests were led by a group of stormtroopers to Embarcadero Marina Park South, a short distance away, where the outdoor amphitheater soon filled to capacity.

The evening was electric—not only because emotions were brimming with anticipation and everyone's sense of history was tingling, but because every guest was given a battery-powered lightsaber to wave jubilantly under the stars as the San Diego Symphony played multiple selections from the *Star Wars* saga. Ending the evening on a high note (and with a dash of Disney theatrics), the symphony closed with a stirring rendition of the iconic *Star Wars* theme while X-wings flew overhead delivering a dazzling display of fireworks (ok, I've since learned there weren't *actually* X-wings, but that's how I remember it). Words that emcee Chris Hardwick had said a few hours earlier at *The Force Awakens* panel summed up the evening nicely: “This is an experience that just this group of us will have for the rest of our lives.”

And so it will. Way to rub it in, Chris.

Yours in the Force!

Pete Vilmur, *Bantha Tracks* editor

GET IN TRACKS!



↑ Bobbajo, a background character from *The Force Awakens*, walked on stage during the presentation to showcase one of the film's more innovative practical creatures. (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images)



↑ Emcee Chris Hardwick welcomes *Force Awakens* screenwriter Lawrence Kasdan (right) to his very first Comic-Con International: San Diego. (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images)



Force Awakens panelists reunite on stage for the surprise *Star Wars* concert staged at Embarcadero Marina Park a few blocks from the convention center. (Photo by Dave Iskra)



↑ Original trilogy cast members Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill, and Harrison Ford are reunited. (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images)



↑ Over 6,000 fans filled a jam-packed Hall H for a rare, historical opportunity to see the main cast members of two trilogies gathered together on one stage. (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images)

BATTIN TRACKS: BY THE FANS FOR THE FANS

Together again! ↗
Actors Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill before taking the stage at the *Star Wars* concert. (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images)

The air buzzed with red, green, and blue blades as the entire audience swayed their lightsabers to the classic rhythms of a galaxy far, far away.... (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images) ↘



As twilight fell, the San Diego Symphony struck up one of several pieces from the *Star Wars* saga score. (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images) ↘



Fireworks topped off an amazing evening that left many fans feeling elated well into the night. (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images)



↑ Cast members of *The Force Awakens* take to the stage for a rare photo-op (which John Boyega dutifully takes advantage of!). (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images)



The Force Awakens heroes pose for a photo just before the *Star Wars* concert begins. (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images)



↑ Fans wait to be escorted to the concert by a detail of stormtroopers. (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images)



↑ Director J.J. Abrams takes a question from a fan during the panel's Q&A session. (Photo by Jesse Grant, 2015 Getty Images)





↑ John Boyega and Daisy Ridley stop by the Lucasfilm pavilion to join fans watching the huge movie screen overhead. (Photo by Matt Martin)



↑ Lucasfilm president and *The Force Awakens* producer, Kathleen Kennedy greets fans at the surprise *Star Wars* concert following the panel. (Photo by Michael Buckner, 2015 Getty Images)

5. BY THE FANS FOR THE FANS



Kevin Doyle, who walked more than 600 miles from San Francisco's North Bay to Comic-Con International: San Diego (see our write-up in the last *Bantha Tracks*), leads a stormtrooper escort to the concert. (Photo by Michael Buckner, 2015 Getty Images)



← Domhnall Gleeson (Hux) and Gwendoline Christie (Phasma) were officially introduced to fans as cast members of *The Force Awakens* at Comic-Con. (Photo by Michael Buckner, 2015 Getty Images)



Fans celebrate having the hot ticket at Comic-Con! (Photo by Michael Buckner, 2015 Getty Images)



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Any original art, envelope art, comics, illustrations, news, stories, meeting information, or any materials voluntarily submitted become the property of *Bantha Tracks*. No compensation will be given for voluntary submissions, and there is no guarantee of publication. Submissions to *Bantha Tracks* will not be returned. Each submission must include the creator's name, age, contact details, date the work was created, and a statement that the work is original, and created by the person submitting it.

GET IN TRACKS!

We need your contributions to *Bantha Tracks* more than ever! If you would like to feature in the magazine, please send photos or art along with your story to Bantha Tracks, c/o Pete Vilmur, P.O. Box 29901, San Francisco, CA 94129



↑ Armed with 6,000 lightsabers, fans brace themselves for the free *Star Wars* concert following the panel. (Photo by Michael Buckner, 2015 Getty Images)



↑ Adam Driver, who plays Kylo Ren in *The Force Awakens*, arrives at the *Star Wars* concert to a fan salute of lightsabers. (Photo by Michael Buckner, 2015 Getty Images)

BOUSHH REVEALED!

Last issue, we featured this great picture of three Wookiees and Boushh at the Arnold Fencing Classic in Columbus, Ohio. While we had the names of the Wookiees, we didn't have the name of Boushh. Finally, we can reveal her name as Rebecca Rush. Sorry, Rebecca, we just presumed it was Leia in there!



BOUNTY HUNTERS



MEET THE STARS, SHOW THE EVIDENCE, WIN THE BOUNTY! *STAR WARS INSIDER*'S BOUNTY HUNTERS SECTION IS SPONSORED BY KOTOBUKIYA. EACH ISSUE'S WINNER WILL RECEIVE A FANTASTIC KOTOBUKIYA *STAR WARS* STATUE KIT! VISIT WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/KOTOBUKIYA TO SEE MORE!

CRAFTSMANSHIP
KOTOBUKIYA

BOUNTY WINNER!

TRIPLE BOUNTY!

I like to call this the "Bounty Trifecta" featuring Temuera Morrison (Jango Fett), Jeremy Bulloch (Boba Fett), and Daniel Logan (young Boba Fett). I met them at Celebration VI. They were very friendly and all signed my figures, which are now on display in my *Star Wars* room!—Kevin Koris, email



Fett #1! Jeremy Bulloch poses with Kevin!



Fett #2! Tough guy Temuera Morrison loves meeting his fans!



Fett #3! Daniel Logan plays it cool!

CAUGHT IN THE ACT!

I captured stand-up comedian and TV actor Christopher Titus at *Star Wars* Celebration Anaheim! —Brett A. Fishkin, email



Brett with his quarry, Christopher Titus, at Celebration Anaheim!

FIRST, BUT NOT LAST!

In April, I went to *Star Wars Celebration* Anaheim. It was the first convention I've ever been to. I met Deep Roy who played Droopy McCool in *Return of the Jedi*, Amy Allen (Aayla Secura), and Orli Shoshan (Shaak Ti). They were all really nice! However, there were two celebrities that I was nervous to meet because they're my favorite characters: Ashley Eckstein (Ahsoka Tano) and Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca). Ashley was really sweet and loves her fans, and the same goes for Peter Mayhew. Sadly, there wasn't enough time to get a picture with him—maybe next time! I hope to meet some other celebrities in the future!

—Jose Ruiz, Calexico, California



Jose meets the lovely Amy Allen.



Ashley Eckstein is always ready with a smile!



Shaak attack! Orli Shoshan poses with Jose!



Actor Deep Roy was a very popular guest at Celebration Anaheim!

CALLING ALL BOUNTY HUNTERS!

WE WANT THE PHOTOS OF YOUR ENCOUNTERS WITH STAR WARS STARS!

Have you met a *Star Wars* star at Celebration or *Star Wars Weekends*? We want your photos! Please send your photos and you could be rewarded with an amazing Kotobukiya *Star Wars* statue! What have you got to lose? Write in to the address on page 4 with your photos and tell us all about your celebrity encounter!

RED FIVE

TOM SPINA'S FIVE FAVORITE ALIENS!

AS A BOY, TOM SPINA WAS SO INSPIRED BY THE CANTINA SEQUENCE IN THE ORIGINAL STAR WARS, THAT HE ENDED UP FOUNDING A COMPANY THAT SPECIALIZES IN RESTORING MOVIE MONSTERS!



1

THE CANTINA BAND

Ever since I first opened up the *Star Wars Storybook* and saw the spread of Cantina monsters, the band has really symbolized the *Star Wars* alien look for me. Rick Baker's vision and Doug Beswick's sculpting (along with paint by the late Laine Liska) combined to create a classic species—one that was made all the better by the fact that there were seven of them!

COOL FACTOR: Don Post's wonderful rubber masks of these guys!

BONUS COOL FACTOR: Recently discovered images and sketches show they'd originally intended for the species to have a second mouth... on its neck! The additional instrument hole was abandoned prior to making the masks for the film.



2

NIKTO



I've always loved the ruddy coloration and the wonderful lines of the sculpture. I absolutely love the way the nostrils trace their way around the mouth and create a "nose" that vents out near his chin; all wonderful design, paint, and character work. They did a great job recreating this one for the prequels as well.

COOL FACTOR: His name is taken from one of my favorite movies: *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

BONUS COOL FACTOR: Each of these guys in *Return of the Jedi* got their own style of awesome headgear!



3

KENNER'S BLUE SNAGGLETTOOTH

I got my first *Star Wars* figures for Christmas and Kenner's Snaggletooth was my favorite from the start! It was a unique interpretation of one of Stuart Freeborn's team's somewhat "earthbound" aliens. He always looked a bit bovine to me, but with his Kiss style silver boots and rockin' belt buckle, he pulled it off.

COOL FACTOR: The belt buckle was added by the figure's sculptor, who used his own business card logo as inspiration.

BONUS COOL FACTOR: The *Star Wars Holiday Special* then copied that logo on the belt of its incarnation of the character, who was then copied by Kenner for its shorter, red Snaggletooth figure!



4

JABBA THE HUTT

My folks recorded *From Star Wars to Jedi: The Making of a Saga* when it aired on PBS, and I must've just about worn through that poor VHS tape! I already loved the Cantina and watching Phil Tippett's crew create the aliens for Jabba's palace was inspiring beyond words, but seeing the effort put into creating and puppeteering Jabba was truly special. That they built this giant foam beast was incredible. That it worked so well and was as believable as the humans and costumed aliens he was acting with is a real tribute to the artistry of all involved!



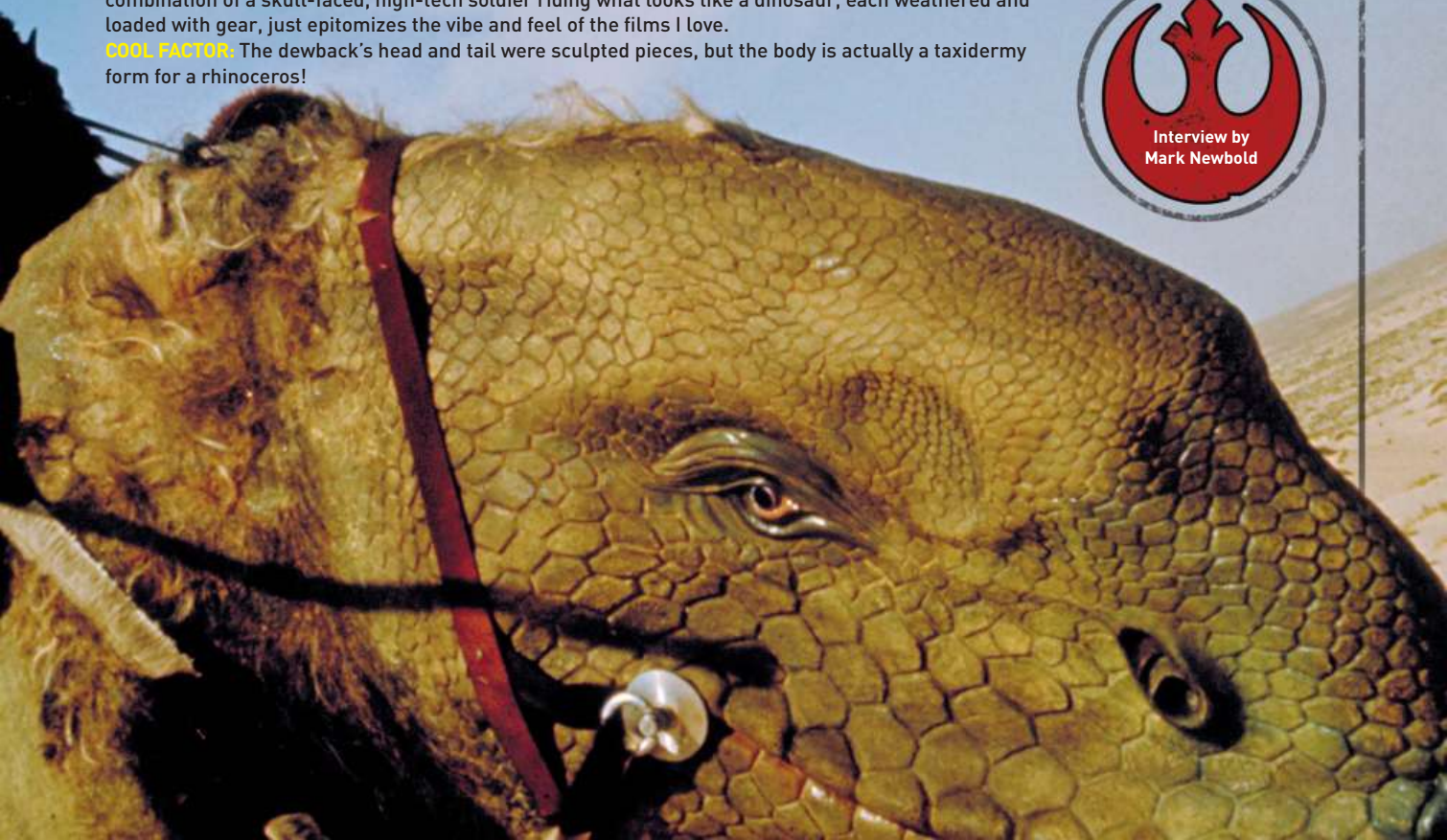
BONUS ALIEN: Jabba's palace alien, Hermi Odle, whose disgusting look I loved instantly when I got the Topps blue series card simply titled, "Horrendous creature!"

5

DEWBACK

I don't know if this is an alien or a creature, but since we don't have them on Earth, I'm calling it an alien. There's an image of the dewback and sandtrooper that graced the pages of the original 1977 souvenir program that, to me, summarizes *Star Wars* more than any other image. This wondrous combination of a skull-faced, high-tech soldier riding what looks like a dinosaur, each weathered and loaded with gear, just epitomizes the vibe and feel of the films I love.

COOL FACTOR: The dewback's head and tail were sculpted pieces, but the body is actually a taxidermy form for a rhinoceros!



THE SAGA CONTINUES... NEXT ISSUE

THE ULTIMATE BATTLE BEGINS!

Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader, and Boba Fett lead us into battle as we bring you action-packed coverage from the frontline in our exclusive *Star Wars Battlefront* preview!



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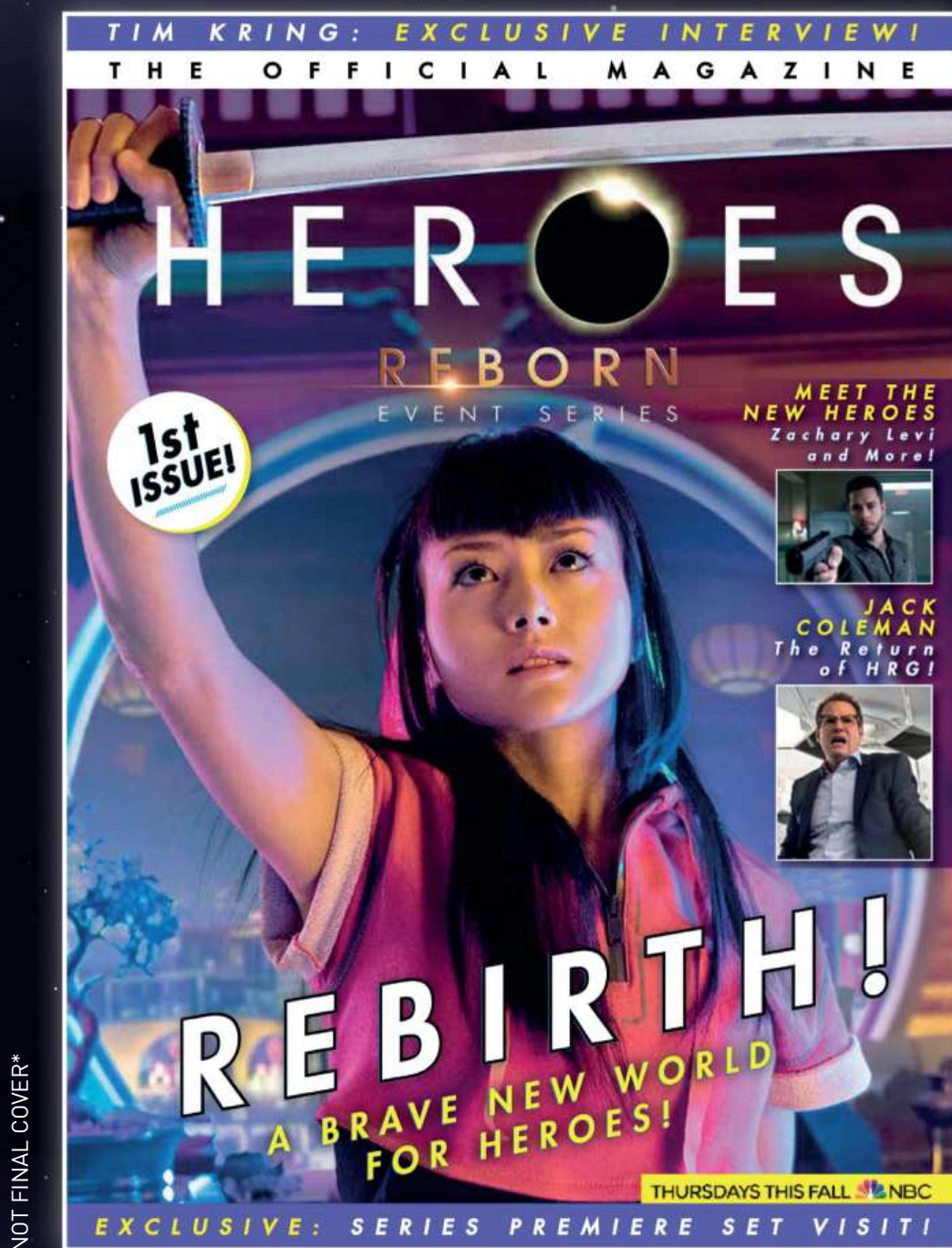
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